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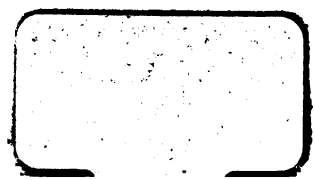

H Munster
with
I Wynne's
best regards.
Sept. 3. 1853.

NCF

Three Original Plays,

BY

JOHN WYNNE,

VIZ.

TRICKS OF THE TIME;

A Comedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

NAPOLEON THE FIRST's FIRST LOVE;

An Historical Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

THE ADVOCATE OF DURANGO;

A Romantic Mexican Drama,

IN FOUR ACTS.

LONDON:

THOMAS BOSWORTH, 215, REGENT STREET.

1853.

656856 A
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Dedication.

TO

JAMES WILLIAM WALLACK, Esq.

WHOM

TIME

MAY YET SEAT

UPON THE

DRAMATIC THRONE

OF

THE GREAT MACREADY,

THESE PLAYS

ARE INSCRIBED

BY HIS

SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

" THE LESS THEY DESERVE, THE MORE MERIT IS IN YOUR BOUNTY."

SHAKSPEARE.

Brighton, Jan. 25, 1853.

My dear Wallack,

I have ventured to dedicate these plays to you, not from any idea that they would prove at all worthy of the honour of having your name associated with them, but from the selfish wish that they should not be ushered into the hard world of criticism without the countenance of a tried friend.

The grateful recollection of many happy hours passed in your society, the valued counsel and assistance which you have often given me in my literary labours, but, above all, the kind encouragement with which you have resuscitated the despairing energies of an unsuccessful author, have "screwed my "courage to the sticking place," and emboldened me to take this liberty with our friendship and your name!

You may naturally ask why none of these plays have been acted? Alas! thereby hangs a tale! In your mind, I know that the test of merit is *not* "failure and success!" but with the generality of mankind it is. All these plays have been rejected—I confess it—at the risk of losing many a reader. The Comedy was rejected as too wild,—the Drama as too tame,—the plot of one play was too intricate; in another, the dialogue was too simple. One manager declared the piece good, but not adapted to "his" theatre. Another also thought

very well of the play, but begged to know who was to act Napoleon? Some managers acted like gentlemen, and were polite even in their refusals: others, I regret to say, acted in quite a contrary manner, and seemed to regard the proffer of a play as an insult, and treated the profferer with silent contempt!

I am, as you are aware, a bit of a philosopher, and shall borrow D'Israeli's famous expression, when he was floored in his first speech in the House of Commons—"the time will "come when you shall listen to me!" The sooner that time arrives the better for the managers, for I intend "*to* "*write till it does.*"

If this penalty for their cruelty obtain me not a little consideration, they will prove themselves Jobs indeed! I am determined to succeed, and there shall be nothing but one perpetual managerial cry of

"Monsieur Tonson come again"

till I do. Oh, ye managers, be warned!

The part of "The Count" in "Napoleon (*not* the Third's) "First Love," was, I need hardly tell you, written for your uncle—that last of all the Romans—at least in this line of character; whose absence from England is only to be tolerated by his friends on account of that great improvement in his health, which (I thank God) a residence in America has secured to him! May he live a thousand years. If he will perform the "Count" in his own beautiful Transatlantic Theatre, I will cross the water to see him! Need I say more?

The part of "Leyva" was written for yourself, and you were once kind enough to say that you thought you could make something of it—come back to us, and try. The drama is not

in a very flourishing state here just now; all its true friends should rally round the tattered banners of "The Stage."

I do not know whether you are properly informed, on your side of the Atlantic Ocean, as to what has occurred here in the theatrical way since you left us; I hope, therefore, that you will not consider it impertinent in me if I conclude this letter with a short account of these interesting matters. At one theatre, the long-bottled Comedy of "Richelieu in Love" has been condemned by *The Times* as a "Theatrical Spectacle," so that we cannot say much for our comedies! At another, much scandal has been caused by an attempt to make a jest of the gallows; but as Calcraft could'nt act the part —owing to his time being so much occupied—it turned out a failure; though I believe the farci-tragical struggles of the *comical* convict were among the best strokes of dramatic art.

"Jack Sheppard" has had another long run—there not having been so many burglaries as usual, lately. I suppose the manager thought the heroes of the jemmy were getting out of practice!

We have had a grand shipwreck done to admiration on the stage—the chain cables being, however, more natural, thanks to the Scene-painter, than "The Chain of Events."

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" has been performed everywhere, and affords another instance, if one were necessary, of the fact, that a good book generally makes a bad play!

In a play at the Princess's, we have been again set a-gaping by the appearance of that well-known animal—that green-eyed monster—the Vampire; who sucks a young virgin's life-blood out of her once every hundred years, just to keep himself warm and comfortable for the ensuing century. Let us hope that none of our friends' daughters may fall beneath

his relentless fangs at the next fatal and regularly returning cycle!

We have had plays, I had almost said "works," spun out to eight extensive acts, and we have seen a sort of pemican-drama in which the transactions of three hundred years were compressed into three short acts!

"Masks and Faces" has had a deserved success, and the world now knows "everything" about a person it never even heard of before—Peg Woffington.

Douglas Jerrold, as witty as ever, has become a favourite at Court, and lost his "*acidity*," but in his last play, "St. "Cupid," he is declared by *The Times* to have forgotten—"*the plot*!"

Just now there is a grand skirmish going on about press-orders on the one hand, and box-keepers' extortions on the other. It is curious that so much fuss should be made about the theatres, just when they are at the lowest ebb of public favour; and this may remind you of the Great Pale-Ale controversy, the puff-poisonous, and the learned Liebig. I fear, however, that the theatres will be empty, if orders are entirely excluded.

Such, my dear Wallack, is the present lamentable state of things—I entreat you then to return to us—come and convince the public that the present taste is a false one—and that to gratify the eye without instructing the mind is a gross prostitution of the dramatic art. We have had senseless glare and glitter enough for one century; impossible and improbable horrors enough for two. Come, then, and "on a "clear stage with no favour," convince the English public once again that they have minds to appreciate the beautiful plays of Shakspeare, Bulwer, and Knowles, and hands to

applaud those whose end, like yours, "is to hold the mirror "up to Nature—to show Virtue her own feature—scorn her "own image, and the very age and body of The Time, his "form, and pressure."

With every good wish for your happpiness and success,

I am,

Yours, faithfully,

JOHN WYNNE.

J. W. WALLACK, Esq.,
PHILADELPHIA,
UNITED STATES.

P.S.—I am engaged in a Drama, which will cut Sardanapalus out completely, as the Manager who has accepted the Play has agreed to give the Scene-painters, those modern Dramatists, a prodigious opportunity of distinguishing themselves by raising his Theatre *three more stories*, in order to give grand and culminating effect to a scene on *the top of the Tower of Babel!*

TRICKS OF THE TIME;

OR,

" BILL STEALERS BEWARE."

A Comedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

13

TRICKS OF THE TIME;

OR,

" BILL STEALERS BEWARE."

Dramatis Personæ.

MONMOUTH, *a Banker.*

WALTER, *his Son.*

COUNT DE SIDLEY, *an Anglicised Foreigner.*

SIR PETER PIMPLETON.

SIR CHARLES SLANG.

SIR HARRY SLASH.

LIONEL, *a Nobleman.*

FRANK HALLAM, *a Merchant.*

GRIFFITH, *Clerk to the Banker.*

TOMMY BROWN.

WAITER.

ALICE, *Monmouth's Daughter.*

LADY ELLEN, *The Count's Niece.*

ADELE, *an Orphan.*

KITTY THOMPSON, *a Widow.*

Scene—London.

Tricks of The Time.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Banker's Private Room. Banker discovered.

BANKER.

Fourteen and six are twenty-two—Pshaw! Match-making plays the devil with one's mathematics! Fourteen and six are twenty, and nine, are ——

Enter GRIFFITH.

GRIFFITH.

A packet from Marseilles, Sir!

BANKER.

Any news of poor St. Clair?

GRIFFITH.

Not a word, Sir. The vessel he sailed in must have been wrecked;—'tis now more than a year.

BANKER.

It is! Poor St. Clair! And his daughter must have perished with him!—I had hoped to have befriended them in their misfortunes; but alas! they are gone where human friendship is unavailing.—Any more failures this morning, Griffith?

GRIFFITH.

Five, Sir! Three first-rates and two respectables!

BANKER.

What times these are! If our soldiers were as easily panic-stricken as our merchants, I wonder what would become

of the country? We should have an invasion instanter; (*looking at his watch*) why, it 's twelve o'clock, and they will be here directly.

GRIFFITH.

Who? Sir? The French?

BANKER.

Phsa! No! A count and three baronets, suitors to Abel Monmouth's daughter!

GRIFFITH. (*aside.*)

Or his money! Your modern baron cuts not your merchant's throat,—he weds his daughter.

BANKER.

Aha! think of that; Griffith! I have chosen the Count not only from regard for his rank, but also on account of the high reports I have received of his excellent disposition and strict morality.

GRIFFITH.

His name, Sir?

BANKER.

De Sidley! It is a French title!

GRIFFITH.

I know the name well, Sir! He is reported the greatest gambler in London.

BANKER.

Stuff and nonsense! If you believe report, one-half the world consists of knaves, and the other half of fools!

GRIFFITH.

Right enough, Sir! For, as the world wags, honest men are fools!

BANKER.

Pooh! pooh! The Count is a most excellent man, and of one of the oldest families in Burgundy! his great-great-great-great-grandfather was Master of the Lap Dogs to Louis XIV.

GRIFFITH.

My great-great-great-great-grandfather was of a much older family than his; of so old a one, indeed, that all recollection of it has been lost in the labyrinth of ages: don't be impatient, Sir! but just consider for a moment. We know something of William the Conqueror, Sir, don't we? But who built the Pyramids? We don 't know that!

BANKER.

What the deuce are you up to with your historical nonsense?

GRIFFITH.

The Count *knows* who *his* ancestors were——

BANKER.

Of course, Sir; I have myself seen the pedigree, as long as my arm——

GRIFFITH.

But I, Sir, do not know who my ancestors were, *ergô*—my family is more ancient than his. If he dates from William the Conqueror, I date from the Pyramids. His ancestors are so modern as to be remembered, mine so ancient as to be forgotten.

BANKER.

Phsa! Phsa! Who ever heard of a banker's clerk's ancestors? How fortunate it is too, Griffith! that the Count has a niece; keeps it all so snugly in the family; Walter and Lady Ellen; the Count and Alice; they shall be married on the same day, and I, Griffith, I—shall die of joy in giving them away!

GRIFFITH.

Throwing them away, I call it. Do you think they can be happy?

BANKER.

To be sure they will: Ellen de Sidley is the perfection of a woman, just made for Walter; and Alice is far too sensible

not to foresee a certainty of happiness with a Nobleman of exalted rank, exemplary character, and splendid fortune ——

GRIFFITH.

Your children know your violence of temper, your taste for Rank and Fashion ——

BANKER.

This passes endurance ——

GRIFFITH.

Besides, Miss Alice *did* love Mr. Hallam, I know!——

BANKER.

She has given him up.

GRIFFITH.

And is breaking her heart about it ——

BANKER.

Griffith! take care; or I shall forget myself ——

GRIFFITH.

You have done so already, Sir; for the sake of a paltry Title, you are about to sacrifice your nearest and dearest —— A London Merchant is'nt good enough for you. Why, Sir, there's many a King that I could name, not half so noble as a London Merchant.

BANKER.

You presume, Sir, wofully on your long services ——

GRIFFITH.

I —— I ——

BANKER.

Not another word, Sir; not another word. Mind your own business. Stick to the ledger, Sir, or you will find the ledger will not stick to you! I shall do him an injury, I know I shall. Leave the room, Sir; leave the room. (*enter* SIR PETER PIMPLETON.) (*in turning out* GRIFFITH, *the* BANKER *runs violently against* SIR PETER.)—Sir Peter, Sir Peter, I beg ten thousand pardons; I fear I must have hurt you?

SIR PETER. (*sinking into a chair.*)

Oh, no! I shall soon get over it; but really your reception was a "leetle" too warm.

BANKER.

The fact is, Sir Peter! that cursed clerk of mine had taken upon himself to be impertinent, and ——

SIR PETER.

You can't imagine how nervous I am, Banker. We young fellows, you know, lead such a devil of a life, and all that sort of thing; I really must put the "drag" on soon.

BANKER.

Why, now, Sir Peter, I should have thought that you and I were very much of an age, and I am sure I can't call *myself* a "young" fellow ——

SIR PETER.

You and I! Ha! ha! ha! 'Gad, Banker! I shall soon be all right again, if you set me laughing at this rate; ha! ha! ha! you never said a better thing in your life ——

BANKER.

I am perfectly serious, I assure you.

SIR PETER. (*rising.*)

The devil you are! why, I'm not thirty; and you—why you must have seen half a century at the very least?

BANKER.

Not thirty, Sir Peter?

SIR PETER.

No, Mr. Monmouth! twenty-eight next,—no! I'm wrong—eight and twenty *last* birthday—that's all—just in my prime, Sir! just in my prime! [*struts about.*

BANKER.

Appearances, to be sure, are proverbially deceitful. (*aside.*) An old humbug!

SIR PETER.

They are; they are. I was always a forward chicken,—shaved at ten, fell in love at twelve, and fought a duel at fifteen ——

BANKER.

Do not strain your memory, Sir Peter, by so very, very distant a retrospect.

SIR PETER.

Few, indeed, would put me down at less than three and thirty ——

BANKER.

Very few, indeed, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER.

A fast life has robbed me of a little bloom, I confess. However, now that I am on the eve of being united to your charming daughter, I intend to reform; leave off late hours, and all that sort of thing; and set up for a pattern husband. I flatter myself, Banker, that Lady Pimpleton will be a happy woman.

BANKER.

I hope she may, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER.

No one is so well calculated for matrimonial bliss, and all that sort of thing, as a young scapegrace ——

BANKER.

Indeed?

SIR PETER.

Yes! For having previously exhausted all the arts of dissipation, he finds his new career a pleasing novelty, and is sure to turn out a model of domestic excellence.

BANKER.

In one word, Sir Peter, to be fitted for companionship with Virtue, it is necessary to be steeped in Vice.

SIR PETER.

Exactly; but Vice is a hard word, Banker; mere youthful gaiety, fashionable dissipation, and all that sort of thing. As for me, I have sown *my* wild oats early ——

BANKER. (*aside.*)

Fifty! Early?

SIR PETER.

And though the choice of the lovely Alice might have fallen upon one more experienced ——

BANKER. (*aside.*)

Not in the fashionable qualifications for domestic happiness, I'll be bound.

SIR PETER.

Youth, Sir, that is, eight and twenty, or there and thereabouts, I hold to be the acmè of perfection in a bridegroom; I do think an old fellow of sixty, (no offence, Banker!) with one foot and a half in the grave, as one sometimes sees, you know, Mr. Monmouth, fancying himself young enough to dawdle out the few remaining years of his existence with a beauty of eighteen, one of the most despicable objects in nature ——

BANKER.

I perfectly agree with you, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER.

While, on the other hand, a fine, young, stalwart fellow of eight and twenty, and all that sort of thing; eh! Banker? with his blushing bride upon his arm, (*takes the* BANKER'S *arm, and struts about,*) is the finest, the very finest sight in the world! But when is the wedding to take place? I am all impatience—you have assented to our immediate union—I am ready this very instant, my dear father-in-law ——

BANKER.

I have consented to Alice's union with the Count de Sidley, my dear Sir Peter ——

SIR PETER.

You take away my breath; why, he is forty at the very least ——

BANKER.

Excuse me, Sir Peter; but I prefer *his* forty to "*your*" eight and twenty; the Count wears better, leads a more regular life, perhaps?

SIR PETER.

Does he? Why he is the wildest of the wild ——

BANKER.

So much the better; "he will find his new career a pleasing novelty, and be the more likely to become a model of domestic excellence," you know, Sir Peter; ha! ha! ha!

SIR PETER.

But De Sidley never *will* reform. Why, it is currently reported that he killed a policeman no *later* than last week, in one of his Bacchanalian orgies ——

BANKER.

Killed a policeman? Impossible! It would have appeared in the Newspapers ——

SIR PETER.

Appeared in the Newspapers!! Not a bit of it! He came down handsomely with the dust, and it was hushed up; hushed up as Railway accidents are—in which one only hears of a few bloody noses, when perhaps half a dozen lives have been lost, or a score of legs and arms broken. Clever fellow, the Count, but mad! a confirmed lunatic! If he appear at the Old Bailey, it will be easy enough to establish "his" Insanity!

BANKER.

Policeman! Old Bailey! pooh! nonsense! I wonder you are not ashamed to retail such stories—an old man, whose grey hairs ——

SIR PETER.

An old man!! Grey hairs!!! I tell you, Sir, I have'nt one! (*aside.*) How the devil should I, when I have my head shaved every morning? (*aloud.*) Grey hairs! This is too much!—Booh! [*exit in a passion.*

BANKER.

I see it all! A base attempt to injure the reputation of a successful rival ——

(*Enter* SLANG *and* SLASH.)

SLANG. (*patting him on the back.*)

How are you, old boy? Allow me to introduce my particular—Sir Harry Slash—my other self, I may say, for Slang and Slash are inseparable, *eh?* Slash?

SLASH.

I should say so, 'pon my soul!

SLANG.

Hope we have still a chance for the Leger—Old Pimpleton has'nt walked over, has he?

BANKER.

Why, really ——

SLANG.

Speak, out, old boy, don't be alarmed!

BANKER.

Why, really, Sir Charles Slang, I was totally unprepared for this sort of language.

SLANG.

Deuce take it, must explain; you don't understand; I was not referring to those ponderous volumes on the shelf there—I merely alluded to the "Doncaster" ——

BANKER.

And what may the business you have come upon have to do with the "Doncaster?"

SLANG.

Oh, nothing—of course. I only meant to say that I hoped Pimpleton had not become the owner of the sweetest little filly in existence ——

BANKER.

If, as I suppose, by the term "filly," you allude to Miss Monmouth ——

SLANG.

Exactly! that's it! ——

BANKER.

Well, then, Sir Charles, I am sorry, for your sake, to inform you that "the filly" is about to become a "Countess,"—the Countess de Sidley!!!

SLANG.

You don't say so? Poor girl! poor girl! I pity her

SLASH.

Poor girl, 'pon my soul!

BANKER.

Why, you are all in a league to worry me. Sir Peter would have it, the Count was wild; nay, even told me a story about having murdered a policeman!

SLANG.

No! *There* Sir Peter was wrong ——

SLASH.

Incowwect! 'pon my soul!

BANKER.

O! of course, I didn't believe it ——

SLANG.

He broke his collar-bone, though; and smashed two or three of his ribs. Poor fellow! Wife, and six children ——

SLASH.

Six childwen, 'pon my soul ——

BANKER.

I don't believe a word of it.

SLANG.

Slash does, though; for he lent the Count fifty pounds to give the poor fellow as a salve for his wounds ——

SLASH.

Fifty pounds, 'pon my soul.

BANKER. (*aside.*)

What one says, the other swears to. However, the Count will be here directly, and I shall learn the truth from "him."

SLANG.

Great bore, isn't, Slash, to lose such a good stake ——

SLASH.

Howwible luck, howwible, 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

By-the-bye, Banker, talking of Girls, seen the new Actress? Splendid creature! the tiniest, prettiest, most insinuating foot and ancle I ever set my eyes on; eh, Slash?

SLASH.

Delicious, 'pon my soul.

BANKER.

Has she any other good points? That's the phrase, I believe ——

SLANG.

Oh, yes! Her eyes are fine, certainly; her nose admirable, her figure excruciating; but her "pastern" is—the devil!

SLASH.

Infernal! 'pon my soul!

BANKER.

I should have thought, now, Sir Charles, the beauty of her mind would have had some share in attracting your admiration; her elocution, her talents ——

SLANG.

Phsa! Banker! you are behind the Age; we care nothing for the acting now-a-days. A lovely face, Sir, not too demurely worn; a tiny ancle, not too shyly shown; a silvery voice, that's archly toned, and eyes that flash their consciousness of love—these are the attributes of perfection in an actress.

SLASH.

Intoxicating, 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

To us Siddons would be a bore, and O'Neil interfere with digestion, for modern Science has decided that the "mind" should never be excited after dinner ——

BANKER.

Not much danger of that with you, Sir Charles ——

SLANG.

Tragedies and Comedies have had their day!—

SLASH.

Blue devils! 'pon my soul!

BANKER.

I should think the ballet would suit you best?

SLANG.

Yes, in a general way, I think it does. One certainly sees "*more*" for one's money.

SLASH.

Decidedly more, 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

But of all things, we prefer a Pastoral Spectacle, full of beautiful shepherdesses, plenty of dances, a few songs, and a grand wind-up of gold leaf and gas-light. The other night, for instance, we saw at the What-dye-call-ɸum, a Gigantic Gilt Cabbage, which, opening into full blossom to the sound of slow music, disclosed the charms of four and twenty of the most blooming beauties in London.

SLASH.

Regular bloomers, 'pon my soul.

BANKER.

This is, certainly, an intellectual Age ——

SLANG.

Yes! I think it is! The gilt cabbage, certainly, was damned scientific. But come, Slash, we must toddle; ta, ta, Banker; can't complain of your behaviour, for I believe it to be one of the most settled axioms of modern society, that a Baronet should give way to a Count, where matrimony is concerned: ta! ta! poor girl; ta! ta!

SLASH.

Poor girl—ta! ta! 'pon my soul!

[*exeunt* SLANG *and* SLASH.

BANKER.

Impertinent puppies ——

(SLANG *and* SLASH *return.*)

SLANG.

By-the-by, Banker, shall we go and see the policeman? We will, with pleasure, and order bulletins of his health to be sent to you every half hour.

SLASH.

Every half hour, 'pon my soul.

[*exeunt* SLANG *and* SLASH.

BANKER.

I hardly think I could tolerate even a Count for a Son-in-Law, if he resembled one of those monkeys; I must inquire about the policeman, though. If that story be true, he may go to—(*enter* COUNT.)—the devil. My dear Count, I am delighted to see you.

COUNT.

I *am* the lucky man, then?

BANKER.

Could you despair for a moment? Alice is too sensible a girl—a Nobleman, whose ——

COUNT.

No flattery, Banker. And has your son consented to our proposals?

BANKER.

He has, my dear Count.

COUNT.

Then the sooner we are all married the better!

BANKER.

Decidedly. I should say in a week, and the papers can be signed the day after to-morrow!

COUNT.

Excellent. That will suit me exactly.

BANKER. (*aside.*)

How shall I muster courage enough to ask him? (*aloud.*) My dear Count, you will excuse the natural uneasiness of a father, but I have heard one of the most absurd stories this morning; of course, I don't believe a word of it, but still, as a father, I feel it right to put the question.

COUNT. (*aside.*)

What 's coming now, I wonder?

BANKER.

You haven't murdered a policeman, have you?

COUNT. (*aside.*)

Who can have told him? An absurd story, indeed; why, Banker ——

BANKER.

Or broken his collar-bone, and smashed two or three of his ribs?

COUNT.

Really, this is too ludicrous!

BANKER.

Of course it is; of course it is: but only think, my dear Count, Sir Charles Slang went so far as to say, that his "Inseparable," as he calls him, Sir Harry Slash, lent you £.50 to pay the doctor; aha! think of that; I confess that *did* stagger me.

COUNT.

And well it might.

BANKER.

As if I didn't know from the first it was a hoax—only think, though, of their being so d—d circumstantial about it: ha! ha! ha! You, my dear Count, are more of a lady-killer than a man-killer! ha! ha! ha!

COUNT.

You are quite easy on the subject now?

BANKER.

Oh, quite! I see the joke!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

It 's more than the policeman did. (*aloud.*) That fellow, Slang, is always amusing himself at my expense, the rogue—too bad to frighten you, though, wasn't it?

BANKER.

Oh, I knew it was a joke ——

COUNT.

By-the-bye, you pledge me your word as to these marriages? I should look foolish, you know, if ——

BANKER.

There's my hand upon it. I give you a "Banker's Word." *Nothing* shall prevent them.

COUNT.

Not even the policeman? ha! ha! Capital. That fellow

Slang 's always so amusing, (*aside*) and be d—d to him. (*aloud.*) Good morning, Banker! [*exit* COUNT.

BANKER.

Ha! ha! Capital. Good bye! How grandly it will read in the *Post!* "By special licence, &c. &c. &c. The Count de Sidley, to Alice, only daughter of Abel Monmouth, Esq., &c. &c. &c.; and, at the same time and place, Walter Monmouth, Esq., &c. &c. &c., to the Lady Ellen de Sidley, niece to the Count de Sidley, &c. &c. &c." I shall die contented after reading that. "My Son-in-law, the Count," how well it sounds; my "Daughter-in-law, the Countess!" Aha! think of that! think of that! [*exit.*

SCENE II.

Drawing Room at the BANKER'S.

WALTER AND ALICE.

WALTER, *reading*—ALICE, *at work.*

WALTER. (*reading aloud.*)

. . . . "For aught that ever I could read,
"Could ever hear by tale or history,
"The course of true love never did run smooth."

ALICE.

Walter!

WALTER.

Alice!

ALICE.

I have a secret for you!

WALTER.

And I for you!

ALICE.

I am miserable!

WALTER.

And about to be married to a wealthy Nobleman? Impossible!

ALICE.

He is hateful to me!

WALTER.

Yet you consented!

ALICE.

What could I do? I dared not ——

WALTER.

Confess your love for another. Is that your secret?

ALICE.

It is indeed! (*rising.*) Will you not save me, Walter? dear Walter?

WALTER.

I know not what to urge. Our father is so bent upon these grand alliances; the Count de Sidley so honourable, so good a man! ——

ALICE.

Alas! He is reported so—but still I doubt him, Walter; a woman's eyes are keen when blinded not by Love, but keener still when sharpened by Dislike.

WALTER.

He seems above suspicion!

ALICE.

Aye! so do thousands! No robe more easily put on and off, as times and seasons change, than Virtue's garb, that cloak of guilty hearts. I have read this "Noble" through and through, and found hypocrisy in every page. No father would insure the misery of his child.

WALTER.

On the contrary, blinded by the glare of Rank, he fancies he is *securing* you a life of dignity and happiness.

ALICE.

Walter! you must learn the history of this Count! I have heard that he is a gamester! Our father, at least, abhors gaming!

WALTER.

As much as he doats on Titles!

ALICE.

Do not men game at Balls?

WALTER.

Men game anywhere and everywhere! At home, abroad, by night, by day, in street, on change, by land, by sea, by road, by rail, awake, aye, even in their dreams! Life is a grand game of hazard, mask the players as they may.

ALICE.

The Count gives a Ball to-night! You must be there. If there be gaming, and he join in it——

WALTER.

He will not play in my presence.

ALICE.

You must disguise yourself—assume some rich man's name—'t will tempt him to the cards ——

WALTER.

I pity your husband. You'll twist him round your fingers.

ALICE.

But only for his good. You'll go, then, to the Ball?

WALTER.

I will.

ALICE.

Thanks, Walter! *Your* secret I know! You do not love the Lady Ellen?

WALTER.

She loves another. She will run away!

ALICE.

Then you are free as air! You have no love?——

WALTER.

I said not so: but "my love" is hopeless!

ALICE.

Nay, nay; in Love's vocabulary there 's no such word!

WALTER.

Sister, the girl I love is *poor*.

ALICE.

That 's bad ——

WALTER.

Of humble birth.

ALICE.

That 's worse ——

WALTER.

And will not have me without my father's will ——

ALICE.

That 's worst of all ——

WALTER.

Is hopeless not the word?

ALICE.

Nay; not so still!

WALTER.

Prove it.

ALICE.

I will! The Count games—you prove that to our father—thus saving me from ruin, he will refuse you nothing.

WALTER.

'Tis worth the trial! What name shall I assume?

ALICE.

It must be a name that savours much of Gold ——

WALTER.

I 'll be a Stockchild, then—that 's a rich name ——

ALICE.

But as a Stockchild you are not invited ——

WALTER.

I'll get into "the House," never fear. Your golden key is an "open Sesame" to any London ball-room. Let but my name be whispered, and the noble host will welcome me; aye, at the very door. Man is but man, and still *will* cringe to Gold—that universal Juggernaut, beneath whose hollow car all *rush* to *immolate* themselves—his Deity on earth! I go to prepare my disguise, though it needs but little art to change a Christian to a Jew in these enlightened times. Frank shall be the man, dear sister—doubt it not,—Frank shall be the man. [*exit.*

ALICE.

May heaven speed thee! If the Count do play,
True Love may yet have hope to win the day. [*exit.*

SCENE III.

Room at the COUNT DE SIDLEY'S.

Enter LADY ELLEN.

LADY ELLEN.

Lionel is late to-day! I suppose my uncle has forbidden him the house. Heigho! what tyrants men are, all except Lionel; he is not a tyrant—that is, not *yet*. I hope Mr. Monmouth has not taken a fancy to me! He seems to have consented very readily to this odious arrangement. Well, if the worst comes to the worst, we must elope. Thank heaven! that's

more easily done now-a-days than it used to be. None of your old rumbling post-chaises now, with one lover's head continually out of the window, encouraging the post-boys, and then all on a sudden finding oneself in the ditch, and the clutches of one's exasperated governor. No! no! (*enter* LIONEL *behind.*) A coupée in a special train, and away we go, forty miles an hour, to Gretna Green and everlasting happiness ——

LIONEL.

You forget the Electric Telegraph.

LADY ELLEN. (*starting.*)

Lionel!

LIONEL.

I say, you forget the Electric Telegraph! After having accomplished our three hundred miles in a blissful state of fancied security, just as we were stepping out of the carriage, we should be quietly secured by the police, and returned like a couple of stray parcels, in separate compartments, to the place from whence we came. So that you see, dear Ellen, young people in our situation are worse off than they used to be— Gretna Green has had its day ——

LADY ELLEN.

Alas! it is too true! I forgot the Electric Telegraph! What is to be done, then, Lionel?

LIONEL.

We must lull your Uncle's suspicions to rest; and then some fine morning we may easily get married under his very eyes. There is a church in the next street, the curate is a friend of mine; (I have a living in my gift he knows will be vacant soon,) and the business is done. All we have to do is to avoid arousing the suspicions of the Count ——

LADY ELLEN.

Then, surely, you should not be seen here.

LIONEL.

In future I shall come in disguise.

LADY ELLEN.

Oh, how charming, just as they do in Novels—a lover in disguise—how truly romantic! but hush! I hear my uncle's step. Oh, I have it—I 'll give you your final rejection ——

LIONEL.

Give me a kiss first. [*kisses her.*

LADY ELLEN.

There! there! on your knees, quick!

(*Enter* COUNT, *behind.*)

LIONEL.

Cruel, cruel Lady Ellen, for the last time, I entreat you to consider that you are driving a — a — a — an unfortunate young nobleman to destruction, dooming a heart that adores you to despair ——

LADY ELLEN.

Rise, my Lord, I beg! your addresses must be paid elsewhere; I might once, perhaps, but it is past. Obedience must now be the guiding-star of my Destiny. No more, my Lord, I pray; you have my unalterable determination.

COUNT. (*coming forward.*)

In which, my Lord, I most cordially concur.

LIONEL. (*rising.*)

There is then no hope?

LADY ELLEN.

None! In "*this*" world.

LIONEL.

lione[illegible] make exceptions?

Monmouth [illegible] COUNT. (*aside.*)

consented very re[illegible]sive one, at all events.

worst comes to the w[illegible]

LIONEL.

Were it not for your Uncle's harsh commands, your reply would be different?

COUNT.

You are importunate, my Lord; my niece has rejected you of her own free-will; I heard her do so. Tell his Lordship so again, Ellen!

LADY ELLEN.

My uncle speaks the truth.

LIONEL. (*despairingly.*)

Then nothing now remains but to say, fare— farewell! May you be happy! and never breathe a sigh over the melancholy fate of one who (*aside*) intends to be your husband by the middle of next week. [*exit.*

COUNT.

You are a good girl, Ellen!

LADY ELLEN.

Am I, uncle? Poor Lord Mountjoy! (*aside.*) Now for the news; luckily, I know it all beforehand.

COUNT.

Lady Ellen, certain arrangements have been made, of which I think it is now time you should have information. A fine fellow, rich, amiable and young, has made proposals to me for your hand!

LADY ELLEN.

How do you know that my taste does not run for Poverty, Ugliness, Sour temper, and Old age? I think I might have been consulted!

COUNT.

And so you would have been; but the fact is, the gentleman is shy, very shy, and begged me to be his interpreter.

LADY ELLEN.

The name of this shy gentleman?

COUNT.

Walter Monmouth! a Banker's son!

LADY ELLEN.

I think I have seen him! Red hair, and terribly marked with the small-pox?

COUNT.

On the contrary, his hair is black, and his face as smooth as your own.

LADY ELLEN.

Will he be at the Ball to-night?

COUNT.

No! but you will see him to-morrow!

LADY ELLEN.

Oh! I dare say he will do very well! Poor Lord Mountjoy!

COUNT.

You consent, then, to the alliance?

LADY ELLEN.

Humph! I *had* rather a fancy for Lord Mountjoy, but if the alliance pleases you, dear uncle, how can the gentleman be disagreeable to me?

COUNT. (*aside.*)

This obedience is surprising! It will be a match particularly agreeable to me, dear Ellen, for I myself marry your husband's sister. If you were to sit out, it would spoil the rubber, and inconvenience the family arrangements.

LADY ELLEN.

Oh! of course, Uncle, "family" arrangements are always the

first to be considered. What are individual affections to family arrangements?

COUNT.

Very true, my dear; but you are sure to love Mr. Monmouth!

LADY ELLEN.

Psha! What does that signify? We shall do all the better for man and wife, if we hate each other. When do the weddings take place?

COUNT.

In a week, at the farthest!

LADY ELLEN.

Oh! then, there is plenty of time!

COUNT.

For what?

LADY ELLEN.

For the dresses, to be sure! What else could I be thinking of? In about a week, uncle, you think?

COUNT.

Yes, my dear. The carriage shall be ordered immediately, to convey you to that most eventful and delightful crisis of a young lady's ambition, the selection of diamonds and white satin ——

LADY ELLEN.

Oh! charming; dear, kind uncle, so thoughtful, so considerate to choose a husband for its poor little fool of a niece, (*aside,*) who'll marry her own choice in spite of you. (*aloud.*) Poor Lord Mountjoy! Heigho! but, I must not keep the carriage! [*exit.*

COUNT.

I did not expect this prompt obedience. 'Tis lucky, though, very lucky! This double alliance will be the

saving of me. Everything has gone wrong lately, even the cards have run counter; my favourite game is getting out of fashion. There are so few Écarté players now-a-days, who can "*not*" turn up the King when they please. May Fortune throw an ignoramus in my way to-night! The great secret of Life, I take it, is to be a good Foolfinder. Skilled in that science, you may command the World like an Aladdin. You require an Arabian, praise a fool's, 'tis your's! A few hundreds, choose your man for a quiet sitting at écarté; thousands change the game to blind hookey; or scratch your horse for the "Derby," when you have laid heavily against him!—A divorce—invite a fool to your house, and he is sure to make love to your wife. And, if you are supereminently skilful, you may gain a million by marrying an old fool's daughter! I never was foiled but once, and that was by a woman; that paragon of beauty—that queen of loveliness—Adele; but I will have her yet; I will, by heaven. (*rings the bell.*) Let me see—yes—that's the only way! (*enter* SCAMP.) Any duns below, Scamp?

SCAMP.

Three, my Lord. Two, *getting* intoxicated in the butler's pantry; the third is quite "drunk," and has been deposited at a short distance from the back-gate.

COUNT.

Many men are not at home to duns; I always am: they are entertained with the best wine in the cellar, gently deposited on the curbstone, and usually pass the night at a police-station. Sometimes they lose their receipts, don't they, Scamp?

SCAMP.

Unfortunately, my Lord.

COUNT.

And sometimes the money which they have received in liquidation of their bills, eh, Scamp?

SCAMP.

Very frequently, my Lord.

COUNT.

Oh! by-the-bye, Scamp, I have a commission for you of great delicacy; you know where the four roads meet, near Hampstead ——

SCAMP.

Where one dark night your Lordship ——

COUNT.

Silence, Sir! Have you any friends, Scamp?

SCAMP.

Male or fe—

COUNT.

Men, who are up to anything,; not nice as to a trifle ——

SCAMP.

Like myself, my Lord! Yes, there's Tom Rackety, Bill Bludgeon, Jack ——

COUNT.

Never mind their names; they could'nt be walking where those four roads meet between six and seven this evening, could they?

SCAMP.

I should think they would like a country walk amazingly, especially if they *knew* your Lordship wished it—(COUNT *gives him money.*)—It's very odd, but now I recollect they told me that they should walk that very way this very evening, at that very time.

COUNT.

Tell them *not* to annoy any pretty girl they may meet, and to be *quite* sober!

SCAMP.

They dine with me ——

COUNT.

Enough. Recollect, she is remarkably handsome, Scamp.

SCAMP.

I know your Lordship's taste to be super-excellent. [*exit.*

COUNT.

Having rescued her from annoyance, she will confide in me; the excuse to get her here will be excellent; once here, she shall find that the Count de Sidley is not a man to be baffled by a girl. [*exit.*

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Adele's Cottage. Adele discovered at the open door.

ADELE.

Thank heaven, he is gone; (*shuts and locks the door.*)—And this is to be poor and unprotected; I dare not walk to breathe the air of evening, but I am to be insulted; *one* friend alone I have, and he is rich and on the sunny side the world, while I —— (*a knock.*) Who's there? Who knocks? The villains follow me. Help, Walter, help!

[*falls fainting on a sofa.*

(The door is burst open.)

Enter WALTER.

WALTER.

Adele! Adele! What ails thee? There are none here but Walter,—thine own Walter! She heeds me not. Some wretch again has frightened her;—*(fetches water and pours it on her face.)* She revives.

. . . . . The roseate hue of life
Steals on her cheek, as moonlight wins its way
Through fleeting clouds!—Adele! look up! look up!

ADELE.

Walter, are they gone?

WALTER.

Gone? Who?

ADELE.

I thought I heard their footsteps; it must have been fancy!

WALTER.

You have toiled too hard to day!

ADELE.

Nay, Walter; insult has unnerved me.

WALTER.

Insult! From whom? When? Where?

ADELE.

You know where the four roads meet?

WALTER.

Well.

ADELE.

Four wretches, staggering with wine, beset me; one put his arm around my waist, struggling for my lips: I cried for help, when, bounding o'er the fence, a gentleman, whose face I thought I recognised, put all the four to flight ——

WALTER.

All four?

ADELE.

They ran the moment he appeared; my rescuer pursued them, and then returning, brought me to my home: he said, he thought he knew the villains, and promised he would have them apprehended.

WALTER.

'Tis strange; four scared by one; what was this Hector like?

ADELE.

He seemed a gentleman.

WALTER.

That is, he wore good clothes.

ADELE.

His manner, too, was polished.

WALTER.

Told you he his name?

ADELE.

He did not; but said he would soon send for me to identify the villains.

WALTER.

It is another plot, contrived to lure thee hence: hear me, Adele—we cannot hope to baffle them for ever; I cannot be always near thee.

ADELE.

Are there no laws?

WALTER.

The laws can punish, not prevent a crime; one way there is, but that I fear to breathe.

ADELE.

Nay, speak it, Walter.

WALTER.

Be mine, and thou art safe!
Armed with a husband's right, I dare the World
To wrong thee ——

ADELE.

Oh, spare me, Walter!

WALTER.

Nay, dear one, it is time I eased my laden heart of all it has to tell thee; I loved thee from the very hour we met; as then, so now I love thee; as now, so ever will I love thee; Be mine, and let us leave this Babylon. Thy future home awaits thee.

'Tis a Paradise of loveliness, Adele,
An ivy-mantled cottage in a glen
Deep in a mountain's bosom; where the larch
To the wind stands stately, and the willow hangs
Its drooping tresses in the chrystal stream
That flows before our door:

The pines that wave above our nestling home,
Their suppliant heads bowed to the furious gale,
Shall only tell us that the winds may rage;
No storm shall stoop to our sequestered vale.
The towering crags that rise above our cot
Shall speak to us of Him, who piled them up
So high toward heaven; there, some crannied nook,
By Nature hewn, shall be our Oratory;
Then, not far, a torrent, and a moss-clad stone
That overhangs the spray, our summer seat,
Where on the chafing waters we may gaze
As on a world, whose strife sweet Love condemns,
And so philosophise, till some young voice,
Echo of thine, shall summon us away.
With all of Art that Monarch may command,
Without deceit, and courtly flattery's wile;
And all of Nature that the wild woods give,
With all that Love, dear Nature's child can yield,
We cannot but be happy. Even Death,
That speaks to worldlings with an iron tongue
Shall whisper "Heaven" softly in our ears
Who've Heaven made of Earth.
No step shall press the velvet turf but ours,
No voice shall break the silence of the glen,
But ours; our valley shall be haunted, thou
Its guardian spirit; I, thy willing Slave.
Be mine, Adele, and this shall be thy home.

ADELE.

Thy father, Walter? Rich, proud, ambitious. Is the poor friendless orphan meet for his son's bride?

WALTER.

We may be wedded secretly!

ADELE.

No, Walter, never! Poor and friendless as I am, I am too proud for that! Won me you have in secret, but, if you wish to wear me, it must be in the broad light of day.

WALTER.

Have I then offended?

ADELE.

Not so; but speak of this no more.

WALTER.

You are sacrificing happiness to Pride?

ADELE.

What you call Pride is Wisdom, Walter; deceit would bring no happiness, for the fount of happiness is Truth: our marriage from your father, you would not long conceal; and then, when he discovered you had wedded an unknown girl, on *me* would the crime be laid; "*I*" should be pointed at as thy bane, thy clog, thy curse,—"the cunning girl that trapped the rich man's son."—No, Walter, no; I will not thus become the scorn of this proud world!

WALTER.

Nay, nay, Adele; believe me, thou dost wrong
The world, in thus condemning all, for that
It doth contain a swarm of envious wasps,
Who foully judge of others by themselves.
The World is like a vulgar gaudy flower
That flouts the eye, yet doth within contain
To bees who search its depths, a golden mine
Of goodness and of wisdom;
That thou should'st wed thy better but in wealth,
The wise and good would scorn not.

ADELE.

The wise and good? Where are they?
Like precious ore, or sparkling jewels, hid

Beneath a mountain of such worthless dross
That men despair to seek them, or like pearls
That must be dived and groped for far beneath
The surface of the waters, and, when found,
Oft disappoint the diver.
Few are the wise, their voices seldom heard;
'Tis Folly's judgment I should have to brave
In wedding thee, and Folly is the World!

WALTER.

I never knew the curse of Wealth till now,
When Poverty would give me all I ask
Of fortune, all I value on the earth!
One hope alone is left.

ADELE.

But one! Thy father's sanction! Get that, and I am thine.

WALTER.

One day, Adele, you promised me the story of your life?

ADELE.

I'll tell it to you now—'tis a simple tale. My father was an English merchant of Marseilles; my mother of Provence; I was their only child, I need not add how loved. Time sped, and a man much older than myself became my suitor. One fatal evening he offered marriage; I refused;—never shall I forget his rage. Ere long, my mother died; evil on evil followed; my poor father no longer looked after his affairs as he had used; at last (and some said much by the contrivance of my rejected suitor), he clasped me to his heart a broken, ruined man! Well! he determined to return to England, where yet he hoped to find a friend or more that twenty years had spared. We sailed, and safely reached the English coast; but then a fog came on, and then a gale, which

drove us toward the shore; the anchors would not hold, the masts were cut away, yet still we drifted onward to the rocks. Oh, Walter, it was a fearful sight; there was a shock, a grating noise, one wild heart-piercing shriek; I recollect no more. When I awoke I was in bed, and anxious faces round me; I asked for my dear father; two only had escaped, myself and my preserver.

WALTER.

And he?

ADELE.

A gallant English sailor lad, who, lashing me to a grating, had swum thus burdened to the land.

WALTER.

The noble boy!

ADELE.

Oh, Walter, what an emblem of this changeful world is the fickle sea, that, like a sleeping child, smiles sweetly in repose, and in a little moment storms so loud, that Chaos seems returned!

WALTER.

It is indeed a hypocrite, that glosses o'er its murders with a smile.

ADELE.

Well, I recovered to find myself alone, without a friend in an unknown land. I came to London, and here have since maintained my humble roof by the Arts I learned in happier days—by Painting and by Music. I paint bright pictures of my sunny home, which childhood's fond and ever faithful eye engraved upon my heart.

WALTER. *(looking at a Picture.)*

They are indeed beautiful!

ADELE.

Prized more than they deserve—from contrast—glowing like heavenly landscapes by the side of this cold northern clime.

WALTER.

They are Nature's gems, and foil need none.

ADELE.

'Tis Contrast, for even when they listen to my songs of Love and Chivalry, soft echoes of Provence, gay home of troubadours, still linger in my notes, and animate with joy grave lips unused to smile. How little thought I, when I learned these arts in luxury's soft lap, that ever day should come when they would earn me bread.

WALTER.

Have you no clue to the friends your father spoke of?

ADELE.

None; my misfortunes have obliterated even their names from my memory; nor do I need their help.

WALTER.

Your health may fail!

ADELE.

And then, would you forsake me?

WALTER.

Nay; but this toil is irksome—ill suited to your birth.

ADELE.

Birth! What is Birth? A pitiful excuse for idleness! My labour brings what noble Birth alone can ne'er obtain—Contentment night and day.

WALTER.

You are indeed a brave girl.

ADELE.

Not brave, Walter, but humble! Convinced of His good will, who makes our toil our joy.

WALTER. (*aside.*)

If I succeed! Oh joy! (*aloud.*) Adele! I must depart; stir not forth, till I return.

ADELE.

You will come to-morrow?

WALTER.

I will not fail; good night, good night! [*exit.*

ADELE.

Good night! (*locks door.*) No! I will not yield; unless his father doth consent I die as I have lived. Better be poor and lonely, though despised, than rich and bear the taunts and scoffs of all! Poor wives that enter into rich men's homes, are oftener guests of Courtesy than Love. I cannot do 't; yet God knows, Walter, that I love thee well.

[*exit into an inner room.*

SCENE II.

A Room adjoining the Ball Room at the COUNT DE SIDLEY'S.

Enter LADY ELLEN.

LADY ELLEN.

Heigho! How stupid the Ball seems to-night. Poor Lionel, I wish he was here; how well he acted his part this morning! Too well! I shall have to look after him, or he will deceive *me* some day. I hear steps; some one comes to ask me to dance, perhaps! yet no,—(*enter* LIONEL, *disguised as an old gentleman*)—*his* dancing days must be over.

LIONEL.

What, the belle of the Ball blooming alone? May I have the honour of your hand in a quadrille?

LADY ELLEN. (*aside.*)

Old as he is, he dances.—(*aloud.*)—I must beg to decline, a severe headache.

LIONEL.

Are you sure it is a *head*-ache?

LADY ELLEN.

I know not by what right, Sir, you question me.

LIONEL.

Nay, be not angry! I only thought you might like to know a little secret about Lio ——

LADY ELLEN.

Hush! What of him, Sir?

LIONEL.

He is here!

LADY ELLEN.

No!

LIONEL.

Yes! Disguised!

LADY ELLEN.

How?

LIONEL.

Ah! that's the secret; his disguise is so perfect that it baffles detection.

LADY ELLEN.

I could see through it in an instant. He must be in the ball-room, and dancing, perhaps—(*going.*)

LIONEL.

You had better take my arm; you are sure you will be able to recognise him?

LADY ELLEN.

Love, Sir, sees through all disguises!

LIONEL. (*in his own voice.*)

Nay, now I am more convinced than ever that Love is blind.

LADY ELLEN.

Heavens! you! Lionel!

LIONEL.

But I'll punish you; you shall dance with an old gentleman. If your uncle asks who I am, say I 'm a friend of Stockchild's.

LADY ELLEN.

And who, pray, is Stockchild? You do not mean ——

LIONEL.

No! only his representative!—my rival in reality!

LADY ELLEN.

What! Mr. Monmouth?

LIONEL.

Just so. He is here on some mysterious business or another ——

LADY ELLEN.

Perhaps he has come to see me?

LIONEL.

No! You need not be alarmed; he and I understand each other perfectly.

LADY ELLEN.

Hush! Some one approaches.—(*enter* SIR PETER, SLANG, SLASH, *and* WALTER, *as* STOCKCHILD.)—I shall have much pleasure, Sir! [*exeunt* LADY ELLEN *and* LIONEL.

SIR PETER.

Well! hang me if that 's not astonishing! Lady Ellen is positively going to dance with that old gentleman, and she refused me!

SLANG.

I suppose you were not old "enough," Sir Peter, tho' I should have thought that fifty-three was a very respectable degree of antiquity!

SIR PETER.

Ha! ha! ha! One of your usual eccentric remarks, Sir

Charles; I must put Mr. Stockchild on his guard,—tho' in this instance I flatter myself it is scarcely necessary!

WALTER.

Oh! not in the least, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER.

Yet, you would hardly imagine me to be two-and-thirty!

WALTER.

Hardly!

PIMPLETON.

It is a melancholy fact, though! and be d—d to it.

SLANG.

It is odd too, as Sir Peter says, for Lady Ellen to dance with an ancient; she refused to dance with us, didn't she, Slash?

SLASH.

Fact, 'pon my soul!

WALTER.

Surely you did not expect her to dance with two gentlemen at once?

SLANG.

Oh no, of course not; we have hit upon a little plan to prevent that,—I do the dancing, while Slash follows us round the room with the Lady's bouquet: poor fellow, he gets jammed in sometimes, and then we are unavoidably separated for a moment.—We should inevitably die if we were long apart! (*aside.*) I am sure "*I*" should—of Starvation!

SLASH.

Apart! impossible! 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

Yes, we have been compared to Damon and Pythagoras, two classic inseparables! have'nt we, Slash?

SLASH.

Pythagowas, 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

We breakfast, dine, and sup together; walk, ride, drive, and sleep in a double-bedded room together; our boots are made on the same tree, our hats on the same block, our clothes by the same tailor, and by the same pattern; which do you think the best fit? Can you perceive any difference, Mr. Stockchild?

WALTER.

Upon my word, it is hard to decide so knotty a point. Turn round, Sir Charles; turn round, Sir Harry, Well, it *is* a puzzler! (SLASH *drops his hat.*) Ah! now I have an umpire! Whichever picks up the hat *without* an accident, wins. [*they in vain try to stoop so low.*

Enter the COUNT.

COUNT.

What's this?

WALTER.

Why! they requested me to decide which was the tightest fit? what say you? I should call it a dead heat!

COUNT.

And so it is! A dead heat, Slang and Slash, always together! I verily believe they will die of the same disease, on the same day, and be buried in the same tomb with A. S. S. on the coffin.

SLANG.

Nay, hang it, don't talk of graves and coffins?

SLASH.

Hate Twagedy, 'pon my soul!

COUNT.

Come, Mr. Stockchild, what do you say to a game of écarté?

WALTER. *(eagerly.)*

I shall be delighted!

COUNT.

And you, Slang, get up a rubber; there's Flash and Pimpleton!

SLANG.

But where shall we find a fourth?

Enter LIONEL.

WALTER.

Oh, here's my friend, Payne! He will join you, I 'll be bound!

COUNT.

Then off we go; come along, Mr. Stockchild; come along, gentlemen! Cards, and a broiled bone. [*exeunt all.*

SCENE III.

A Card Room in the same house. Supper table at back.

COUNT, WALTER, SLANG, SLASH, SIR PETER, LIONEL, *and* SCAMP.

SLANG. (*handing the cards, speaks so as* WALTER *can hear him.*)

(aside.) I like to pick up a good thing; I 'll back De Sidley. (*aloud.*) Mr. Stockchild, poney a game, what do you say?

WALTER. (*seating himself with his back to a mirror.*)

With all my heart. (*aside.*) Now, luck befriend me!

SLANG.

What 's your card, Slash?

SLASH.

A deuce, 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

Mine, an ace; so we play together.

WALTER.

Slang and Slash, still inseparable. (*to* COUNT.) The stakes?

COUNT.

Whatever you please. I generally play for a hundred!

WALTER.

A hundred, be it, then! My deal!

SIR PETER.

De Sidley, I back Mr. Stockchild for a poney!

COUNT.

If you please, mark the King, and —— trick, two ——

SLANG.

Four by honours!

SIR PETER.

Nay, I had the Queen ——

SLASH.

Four by honours, 'pon my soul!

SLANG.

Which makes a treble ——

COUNT.

Game the first.

SIR PETER. (*hastily.*)

De Sidley, I stop!

COUNT.

Bravo! Caution; ever the companion of old age! A vole, —the cards run against you, Mr. Stockchild!

SLANG.

Really, Slash, you played infamously, there; you should have discarded the knave.

SLASH.

What? when I have all the diamonds? I appeal to the company, 'pon my soul.

WALTER.

Sir Charles is right,—in your situation, you should discard the knave or you lose your diamonds!

SLANG.

A treble, double, and the rub. Your deal, Mr. Payne!

COUNT.

The King! game the third!

WALTER.

Have you any objection to change seats?

COUNT.

Not the least, if you wish it——(*aside.*) He does'nt like the mirror. [*they change seats.*

WALTER.

Three ponies for you, Sir Charles! and for you, Count, three hundred!

COUNT.

Thanks!

WALTER.

The stake is really so trivial, that I find it impossible to attend,—what do you say to increase it?

COUNT.

Just as you please. What shall it be?

WALTER.

I 'll play you five games for a thousand a game.

COUNT. (*aside.*)

I must win; he knows nothing of the game! (*aloud.*) Five games, at a thousand each; done!

SLANG. (*aside.*)

If De Sidley ventures, so may I! (*aloud.*) Mr. Stockchild, you a hundred on each game!

WALTER.

Done! A "New" pack of cards, if you please.

[SCAMP *brings new cards.*

WALTER. (*to* COUNT.)

We play the match through with these cards! Sir Peter, why don't you back me?

SIR PETER.

Thank you, but I fear the luck 's against you.

COUNT.

My deal! The King!

SIR PETER.

I thought I was right.

WALTER.

I propose!

COUNT.

Play! (*aside.*) D—n that SCAMP! He has brought the wrong cards!

WALTER.

The trick. You forced me, I believe! Two!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

Confound the fellow—he plays a deuced deal better than he did!

SLANG.

The trick, and four by honours! Come! let us watch the Écarté. [*they rise.*

WALTER.

A vole! Game the first ——

SLANG. (*aside.*)

Confound it! I begin to think I am in for it!

COUNT.

I propose!

WALTER.

How many?

COUNT.

A book. I never saw such rubbish. Again?

WALTER.

No! Play! Mark the King!

COUNT.

Another game gone. I never saw such luck!

WALTER.

I think I improve in play, too; one can't play long with a professor without learning something of the game! The King!

COUNT.

Again!

SIR PETER.

He plays beautifully! Slang, I'll back Mr. Stockchild for a hundred?

SLANG.

Not with me, Sir Peter!

PIMPLETON.

Then with you, Sir Harry?

SLASH. (*aside to* SLANG.)

Shall I?—(SLANG *shakes his head.*) (*aloud.*) Could'nt be done, 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

I say, Slash, do you want to back the winner of the Derby? I've got a commission to lay against him. Hedging money!

SLASH.

I should say so, 'pon my soul!

SLANG.

Well, then, I'll lay you two monkeys to one against Flatcatcher.

SLASH.

Thank you, I'll book it—Flatcatcher—'pon my soul.

WALTER.

Two monkeys and only one Flatcatcher! Ha! ha! ha!

Game the third! Why, Sir Charles, you don't look pleased; I 'll let you off for £.400.

SLANG.

Done. Slash! lend me £.400!

SLASH.

Five, if you like, 'pon my soul.

SLANG.

Well, give me Five, I shall want it, by-and-bye, I dare say.

WALTER.

A joint purse, too, eh, Sir Charles?

SLANG.

No! the purse is entirely Slash's.

COUNT. (*rising.*)

You have won every game! Five thousand! I really haven't so much in the house, but I 'll give you an I O U.

WALTER.

Certainly. (*aside.*) Just the thing I want!

COUNT.

Scamp; pen and ink! (*aside.*) D—n you! (*aside to* SLANG.) Tell him about the marriages! [*writes.*

SLANG. (*to* WALTER.)

Money perfectly safe!

WALTER.

Of course, Sir Charles; I haven't a doubt of it! A rich man like the Count ——

SLANG.

Aye, and he is just on the eve of being married to an immense heiress, a Banker's daughter; the girl easily manageable, and the father a regular old dolt ——

WALTER.

Oh! the father 's a dolt, is he?

SLANG.

I must tell you besides that, the Banker's son is to marry the Count's niece; and the son is a spoon, a regular greenhorn!

WALTER.

Oh! the father 's a dolt, and the son a regular greenhorn?

SLANG.

So you see, your money's safe enough! By-the-bye, I owe you £.400. [*hands it to him.*

WALTER.

Thank you! quite right! But doesn't Sir Harry bet?

SLANG. (*retiring.*)

No! he only pays ——

WALTER.

And backs the winner of the Derby—when you have a commission to lay against him!

COUNT. (*coming forward.*)

I am sorry to be obliged to give you a piece of paper! [*hands paper.*

WALTER.

Oh! pray don't mention it; to me it is quite as good as money; so easily carried, you know! [*putting it in his pocket book.*

COUNT. (*aside.*)

I wish all my creditors were of the same opinion! (*to* SLANG.) We must fleece him after supper!

SLANG.

I shall be delighted to assist ——

COUNT.

Scamp, is supper ready?

SCAMP.

Quite ready, M. le Comte!

COUNT.

Come, Mr. Stockchild, to supper! to supper!

WALTER.

With pleasure; winning makes one quite hungry!

[*they all seat themselves.*

COUNT.

Slang! will you oblige me by being Vice!

SLANG.

With pleasure——

WALTER.

Hear! hear! I am sure Vice could not be better represented ——

COUNT.

What will you take, Sir Peter?

SIR PETER.

A thigh of a woodcock, if you please!

COUNT.

Mr. Stockchild! glass of wine?—Champagne?

WALTER.

With pleasure!

COUNT. (*aside to* SCAMP.)

Keep that gentleman's glass full. (*to* WALTER.) Your good health!

SLANG.

Mr. Stockchild! Champagne? [*they drink.*

WALTER.

I think you won to-night, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER.

Confound it, no! I left off just as the luck turned——

WALTER. (*aside.*)

I 'll feign intoxication! (*aloud.*) Count! have I your permission to propose a toast?

COUNT.

By all means! (*aside.*) Wine works wonders.

SLANG.

Bravo, Stockchild! The toast! the toast!

WALTER. (*rising.*)

I am no orator; no orator, I say.

ALL.

Yes! yes! you are! You are!

WALTER.

I tell you I am not—no orator at all—and shall, therefore, come to the point without any more circumlocution!

ALL.

Hear! hear!

SLANG.

Bravo!

SLASH.

Devilish good, 'pon my soul!

WALTER. (*feigning intoxication.*)

The distinguished individual, whose health I have the extremely felicitous honour of proposing, altho' only a Count among Peers, is a Prince among good fellows! Count, I have the honour of drinking your very good health!

SLANG.

Bravissimo! You should get into the House, Mr. Stockchild!

WALTER.

I hope I shall, by-and-bye! tho' they won't let me just yet. Short speeches would be an improvement there!

COUNT. (*rising.*)

Mr. Stockchild, and Gentleman, I thank you for the great honour you have paid me, and beg to call upon Sir Charles Slang for a song.

ALL.

Aye! aye! Slang's song!

WALTER.

The song by Slang, and the chorus by Slash! And I vote it 's a drinking song! This champagne is ad—mir—able!

SLANG.

Then here goes for " The Glass of Champagne."

Song.

I.

When man is oppressed by the cares of the world,
When Fortune looks gloomy, and luck 's on the wane,
When friendship forsakes him, and duns throng around,
There 's nothing in life like a glass of champagne.
Chorus,—Champagne! champagne!
Sparkling champagne!
There 's nothing in life like a glass of champagne.

II.

The Statesman who rules the whole world by his nod,
When wearied with scheming to prosper his reign;
Or badgered by foes, or by friendship cajoled,
Finds his spirits revive with a glass of champagne.
Chorus, etc.

III.

The Bishop when tired of episcopal toils
His income to double its due to maintain,
Will own that he flies from the troublesome task
To comfort his heart with a glass of champagne.
Chorus, etc.

IV.

The Soldier, whose sword is the shield of the land,
The Sailor, who conquers our foes on the main,

Confess that to speed them in glory's career
There 's nothing in life like a glass of champagne.
Chorus, etc.

V.

The sweet witching girl, too, that, cold as a stone,
Repulsed all your vows with the greatest disdain,
Owns the power of the charmer, and sighs her consent,
As she quaffs off delighted a glass of champagne.
Chorus, etc.

ALL.

Bravo! bravo!

SIR PETER.

Talking of "sweet witching girls," have you seen the Hampstead Beauty, De Sidley? I think they say her Christian name is Adele, an artist, and all that sort of thing!

COUNT.

Aye! she is indeed a divinity—a Venus! But only fancy Mr. Stockchild, she pretends to be shy!

WALTER. (*aside.*)

Libertine!

SLANG.

I believe she is shy, too; even you, Count, have failed with, her.

COUNT.

Have I?

SIR PETER.

Shy women are as scarce as shy Railway directors. Let us get her up a testimonial!

COUNT.

Shy as she is, I 'll lay a wager she sups with us in this room to-morrow night, or rather to-night, for I see it is already morning!

WALTER.

What will you wager?

COUNT.

I owe you £.5,000, I will bet you double or quits.

WALTER.

Done! Perhaps you will give me a memorandum of the wager?

COUNT.

With pleasure! (*rising and aside.*) If he "is" tipsy, he is d—d particular! [*writes.*

WALTER. (*aside.*)

This is killing two birds with one stone with a vengeance.

COUNT. (*handing him paper.*)

There! will that do?

WALTER.

Nothing can be more correct; and now, Gentlemen, I wish you all a very good morning!

COUNT.

What! won't you give me my revenge?

WALTER.

Not this morning! I never play after supper; besides, you know you will get it all back to-night! (*showing paper.*) Come, Payne! (*aside.*) Let me see! I am to have an interview with Lady Ellen at eleven! Yes, that will be time enough! [*exit followed by* PAYNE.

COUNT.

Confound the fellow! He has walked off pretty coolly, I think, with my £.5,000.

SLANG.

And my (I mean Slash's) £.400. I say, De Sidley, "We 'll fleece him after supper!" Ha! ha! ha! By Jove, you are fairly done!

COUNT.

But I shall be quits with him to-night!

SLANG.

What a bore it would be, if she did 'nt come, would 'nt it?

COUNT.

Phsa! I am certain of her!

SLANG.

I am glad of it. £.10,000 is no trifle to owe, much less to pay. Good night. Come, Slash! nothing more to be done here, we 'll go to the "Cocoa Tree," and have some hazard.

SLASH.

Just as you please! 'pon my soul.

[*exeunt* SLANG *and* SLASH.

COUNT.

The hazard of which will be all on one side. I must say I should like to have a "Slash!"

SIR PETER. *(coming forward with his mouth full.)*

I say, Count, any fun to-night? any policemen?

COUNT.

You had better go to bed.

SIR PETER.

I 'll be d—d if I do. I 'll to the ball room; the deux-temps is my delight. La! la! la! [*exit dancing.*

COUNT.

Scamp!

Enter SCAMP.

Yes! M. le Comte.

COUNT. (*writing.*)

You gave me the wrong cards. The next time that happens, I give you up to justice. *(coming forward and whispering.)* An escaped "forçat" cannot afford to make mistakes. Enough!

Let this note be conveyed to its destination at ten this morning, and let the carriage be at the same address at eleven to-night.

SCAMP.

Yes, M. le Comte! [*exit.*

COUNT.

Even if I lose, which is next to impossible, the banker's daughter will set all to rights. Yes, that is the grand coup, by which the Count de Sidley shall baffle all his enemies, the duns, and once more set sail, with a flowing sheet, on the Elysian sea of luxury and bliss! Vogue la galère! et vive la bagatelle! [*exit.*

End of Act II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

TOMMY BROWN'S *Lodgings.* TOMMY *discovered opening a Letter.*

TOMMY.

This is from Kitty; I know it by the seal—a heart skewered with an arrow—let us see what the poor girl says —(*reads*)—"My dear duck Tommy, I shall be with you to-morrow" (that 's to-day) "by ten o'clock in the morning," (it 's half-past nine now) "to arrange the preluminaries" (poor Kitty, the long words puzzle her,) "for our marriage. We can go together to the lawyer about the settlings—which will be that thousand pounds you have snug, you know where;" (wish I did) "as with a Government situation" (first catch your crocodile) "we shall have plenty to live upon without breaking in on our principles.—Yours till disease,

KITTY TOMKINS, Widow."

Well, this is a pretty kettle of fish. Poor Kitty! how disappointed she will be when she hears I have been swindled out of my thousand pounds, and have 'nt got a situation of any sort! If I did 'nt know she was good-tempered, remarkably good-tempered, I should never be able to muster up courage to tell her the particulars. She will think me such a fool,

and so I was a fool to go and put my name to paper. Suppose I romance a bit, and tell her it 's the panic in the money market, or the depreciation of railway shares. The devil of it is, I can 't tell a lie and stick to it. No! I 'll tell her the truth.—(*a knock.*)—Oh! Lord! how punctual she is! —(*another knock.*)—I declare I feel so queer.—(*another knock.*) —I must let her in; there 's no help for it.

[*opens door, and* KITTY *rushes into his arms.*

KITTY.

Well! Tommy! how *do* you do to day? and ar 'nt you glad to see me? Why, what 's the matter? you look for all the world just as if you were going to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and have your head stuck upon Temple Bar! Is this the appearance you put on the day before you clasp your Kitty to your arms for ever? Something has happened! I know it has! You have deceived me, villain! you are already married! Oh, Tommy! I shall faint, I know I shall.

[*sinks into a chair.*

TOMMY.

Oh, no! pray do 'nt, there 's a dear—do 'nt faint; some thing has happened, but I 'm not going to commit bigamy, indeed I 'm not.

KITTY.

I know it 's something dreadful; you have got three small children, then?

TOMMY.

Something dreadful *has* happened, but not the wife and children.

KITTY.

What is it then?

TOMMY.

Why, we can 't be married, that 's all.

KITTY.

That 's all? not be married!? and I 've gone and ordered all the things. What 'll Mrs. Perkins and the Miss Perkinses say, I should like to know? and Mrs. Jenkins? I 'm mad with rage and jealousy! This is too much, Sir! Why can 't we be married, pray? Are all the parsons dead? or are all the churches burnt down, or what, Sir?—or what, Sir?

TOMMY. (*aside.*)

Not quite so mild as I expected! (*aloud.*) Nothing of that sort, *Mrs.* Thompson!

KITTY.

What then, Sir? Oh, dear! I shall be off, I know I shall!

[*sinks into a chair again.*

TOMMY.

You have said the word; our marriage must be *off*, Mrs. Thompson. You see before you a — a — beggar—a pauper, without a shilling in the world.—(*sinks into a chair.*) (*aside.*) She 'll soon be gone now!

KITTY.

What? a beggar?

TOMMY. (*aside.*)

She 's putting on her shawl.

KITTY.

A pauper?

TOMMY. (*aside.*)

She does 'nt even say, good bye!

KITTY. (*rising.*)

Without a shilling in the world.

TOMMY. (*turning round.*

And now she 's gone!—(KITTY *lays her head upon his knees and cries.*)—As long as the heart 's in the right place, never mind the temper. Come, Kitty dear, dry your eyes; come,

don't take on so, it can't be helped. Come! come! cheer up! Here, sit by me, and I'll tell you all about it. Besides, Kitty, I've got a friend left, tho' I have lost my money, and that does'nt happen to everybody. Mr. Hallam is doing the best he can for me! There, now, I'll tell you how it was!

KITTY.

Forgive me for being so angry, Tommy! Indeed, I would'nt, if I had known; I would'nt, indeed, Tommy!

TOMMY.

Oh, never mind! Now, Kitty, listen; I have been infamously swindled out of my thousand pounds ——

KITTY.

At Newmarket, Tommy? You surely have'nt been among the Jews upon the turf?

TOMMY.

No!

KITTY.

Then you have been buying scrip? that's it, is'nt it now, Tommy? You have got shares in some Rail that do'nt go anywhere! or in some Emigration Company as ain't got no existence?

TOMMY.

No, Kitty; Horses, Jews, Engines, and Emigration Companies are bad enough, but something 's worse! I have been robbed, Kitty, by a gentleman connected with some of the most aristocratic families in the kingdom!

KITTY.

La! Tommy!

TOMMY.

Yes, Kitty, soon after I proposed to you, Kitty!

KITTY.

Oh, yes! I remember when *that* was!

TOMMY.

I began to look out for a genteel situation, when, one day, (*pulling a newspaper out of his pocket*) this damnable advertisement caught my eye. There, read that.

[*hands her the paper.*

KITTY. (*reading.*)

"Any Gentleman"——

TOMMY. (*interrupting, and repeating by heart.*)

"Who can command £.1,000 may be recommended for, "and installed into a Government situation, of the annual "value of £.300. Apply personally to X Y Z, at 24, "Diddle street, between the hours of twelve and two. None "but principals will be treated with." That's put in to prevent your having a lawyer with you.

KITTY.

Why, Tommy, how well you know it by heart!

TOMMY.

Yes! I've cause to remember it! Well, Kitty, I thought this just the thing, so off I went to Diddle street, where I was immediately introduced to that infamous and abominable swindler, X Y Z.

KITTY.

But la! you ought to have known him, he had pistols in his belt, and all that, had'nt he, just like a highwayman?

TOMMY.

Pistols? not a bit of it! Lord love you! a Duke could'nt have looked more like a gentleman than X Y Z did. I might have defended myself against a highwayman, but a Swindler, Kitty, is a Sneak! his pistols are pen and ink, and his stand and deliver, nothing but soft-sawder! La! how he did soap me over and rub me down! I was just the man the Govern-

ment was on the look out for! They had refused the situation to ever-so-many, but *now* he was sure they had met with the very man! Well, what with this bit of gammon and the other, his aristocratic connections, (he said he was first cousin to the Duke of Marlborough,) and his moustachios, Kitty, I accepted a Bill for £.1,000 at three months, and he promised me faithfully that his cousin, the Duke, or some of his friends, would have me put in the Gazette immediately! and *there* I shall be, under *one* head, sure enough, for the Bill is due to-morrow, and the £.1,000 must go to pay it with!——

KITTY.

But, Tommy, I 'll tell you how you 'll catch him! have a policeman ready, and seize him when he presents the Bill!

TOMMY.

Unfortunately that wo'nt do; for it is just as likely to be presented by the Archbishop of Canterbury as by anybody-else. When these fellows get hold of a Bill, they circulate it, you see, Kitty, in that artful way, that it gets a bit more respectable every time it changes hands. First, perhaps, the swindler gives it to a horse-dealer, (they are never very particular, you know,) then the horse-dealer forks it on to a farmer, down in the country; the farmer sends it to his machine-maker, and the machine-maker pays it for rent to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and, when the day arrives, down comes his Grace's agent on you for the money!

KITTY.

But can 't you trace it back to the swindler?

TOMMY.

They are far too clever for that; I have only one hope; Mr. Hallam is doing his best for me; if he fails, the thousand is gone!

Enter FRANK HALLAM.

FRANK.

I have it, Mr. Brown, I have it!

TOMMY.

What? The Bill?

FRANK.

No! The *Chronicle!* Read that —— [*hands paper.*

TOMMY. (*reading.*)

"Any gentleman who has at his disposal a few hundreds " may hear of a lucrative and easy situation, by applying to " A B C, at No. 140, Brazen Square, between the hours of " three and five. None but principals need apply!" Well, Sir, this will only take some other poor devil in. If it had been X Y Z now, one might have given him a call.

FRANK.

Isn't it just as easy to write A B C, as X Y Z? I believe that both advertisements are by the same hand!

TOMMY.

Well, Sir, and what do you advise?

FRANK.

Come to my house at once, and we will see if we cannot for once outwit a swindler!

TOMMY.

Thank you, Sir, I 'll be there, you may depend upon it ——

FRANK.

Who is this? Your wife?

KITTY.

Soon shall be, I hope, Sir; thank you!

TOMMY.

It all depends upon the Bill! One can't marry without money, you know, Sir!

KITTY.

More 's the pity. I recollect I had to wait five long years for poor Tomkins ——

TOMMY.

Let the dead rest, my dear; you are always talking of poor Tomkins, as you call him.

FRANK.

I foresee a squall brewing. Mr. Brown, mind you are punctual, and don't let the blandishments of your amiable widow detain you, as we must be sure to be at Brazen Square before A B C arrives. [*exit.*

TOMMY. *(aside.)*

Amiable widow! I 'm not so sure of that ——

KITTY.

Come, now, don't be cross. Isn't he a nice gentleman? You 'll get your money back, Tommy! And, if you do, will you marry me, Tommy?

TOMMY.

Humph! Your temper!

KITTY.

Well, it was aggravating to think you had proved unfaithful, Tommy; I should never have been able to bear up against the spite of Mrs. Jenkins and those odorous Perkinses!

TOMMY.

Well, Kitty, I forgive you, and you "shall" be Mrs. Brown! There, one kiss; now, put your things on, and I 'll see you home; and then be off to Mr. Hallam's. (KITTY *offers to kiss him again.*) What? One more? Well, I don't mind! Now, then, come along! Come along! X Y Z, A B C, A B C, X Y Z. [*exeunt.*

SCENE II.

ADELE'S *Cottage.*

Enter ADELE, (*reading a note.*)

"The gentleman who rescued Mlle. Adele from insult last " evening, has much pleasure in informing her of the appre- " hension of the ruffians. Her presence will be required " this evening, and as Mlle. may be a stranger in London, " he takes the liberty of placing his carriage at her disposal. " It is ordered to be at her door between ten and eleven, the " time fixed upon by the magistrates, as it would be unjust to " keep the men in custody all night, unless it was quite " certain they were the right parties. The bearer of this will " call for an answer in two hours." A curious hour, indeed, for business! Walter was right. Where have I seen this gentleman before? Ah! I remember! He is, indeed, a wretch! (*throws away the note.*) When, oh! when will this persecution cease? Is not the disgust with which I spurned him, a sufficient shield from his hateful attacks? How can he continue to address words which disgrace the sacred name of Love, to one who loathes him? (*enter* WALTER.) Oh! Walter! thank heaven, you have come. I breathe again ——

WALTER.

I know all. This champion of innocence—this new Don Quixote—has invited you to his mansion. (*takes up the note.*) Oh! he sends his own carriage for you! Burke was wrong—the days of Chivalry are not departed. Well, no matter! She will not be recognised! Adele! Ink and paper. We must answer this billet doux directly! A Count should not be kept waiting!

ADELE.

A Count?

WALTER.

Even so! A Count!—of ancestry and wealth—the Count de Sidley!

ADELE.

He is then powerful! Oh! Walter!

WALTER.

Bad men powerful? Not in England, long. They may, indeed, assume the mask of virtue for a while—a little while—but soon the grasp of iron-handed Truth drags off each frail disguise; and then, like mummies, bared to light of day, they crumble into dust! You know I have a sister!—a dear sister?

ADELE.

Oh, yes. You have often spoken of her,—I long to love her!

WALTER.

My father is bent upon her marrying this very Count—has pledged his word to him that he shall have her ——

ADELE.

He knows him not, then?

WALTER.

He is a Count!—quite character enough for any bridegroom! He gave a ball last night, which, in disguise, I went to. Towards midnight cards were introduced, and I played with the Count. This paper shows, with what success!

ADELE.

Five thousand pounds!

WALTER.

Adele! my father loathes a gamester! This little paper sets my sister free! Well! after the cards, came supper! Then your

name was introduced. The Count said you were his intimate acquaintance—in fact, engaged that you should sup with him and us to-night! A bachelor's party! Oh! how I longed to seize him by the throat, and choke him in his lie! But I forbore. To-night my retribution shall be signal. Now, sit you down, and write. (*she writes to his dictation.*) "Mlle. "Adele presents her compliments to her anonymous corres- "pondent. The carriage shall not quit her cottage empty." Enough; he will suspect nothing!

ADELE.

I do not comprehend.

WALTER.

A lady will be here this evening to take your place; she herself will tell you who she is, and why she plays this trick upon the Count.

ADELE.

Her honour, Walter?

WALTER.

She will explain everything.

ADELE.

And is this man indeed a Noble?

WALTER.

A Count of long descent.

ADELE.

It cries shame upon Nobility that a Count should act so basely.

WALTER.

Nay! blame not "all," where "one" alone is guilty! There are bad Kings, bad Burghers, and bad Peasants—why not bad Nobles? What are they all but men? He who acquires by noble deeds a Dukedom, cannot hand down his valour with

his blood—would that he could!—then England were still blessed, and safe from foreign foe.

ADELE.

True, Walter; Rank and Wealth, tho' they may "adorn," cannot "create" Virtue!

WALTER.

No! Virtue is a gift from Heaven, which, like the blessed sunshine, the poorest and the lowliest may enjoy; it is within the reach of all, and rejected by the Humble as often as by the Great, by the Peasant as often as by the Peer! nay, sometimes even Priests love this world better than the next!

ADELE.

The Noble should o'ertop the crowd as much in Virtue as in Rank. Like a stately column, that, towering to the skies, proclaims a Hero's fame, he should be an object not only of vulgar wonder, but of affectionate veneration—not the mere Noble, but the glorious Man!

WALTER.

And, when he is not, let infamy attach to himself alone, not to the Order which he disgraces! ——Adele——*(taking her hand.)* Do you recollect your promise?

ADELE.

Yes, Walter! When your father consents—I will be your wife—your happy wife!

WALTER.

If I save my sister, he will refuse me nothing! He will have sickened of grandeur!

ADELE.

You are too sanguine!

WALTER.

Who would despair, with such a prize before him? By

Heaven! methinks, were I afloat upon the Main, a ship-wrecked-man, a thousand miles from land, and knew that thou dids't stand upon the beach to wait my coming, I would never cease to hope to reach thee still, and clasp thee in my arms—all perils past—till Death had dragged me fathom on fathom down, and buried this poor heart in Ocean's deepest cave!——

ADELE.

Dear Walter!

(After a pause.) WALTER.

I *must* tear myself away! The lady will be here in time to take thy place.—Farewell.

ADELE.

You will be here early to-morrow?

WALTER.

I will, my love—farewell! [*exit.*

ADELE.

Farewell, until to-morrow. [*exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room at the BANKER'S.

Enter ALICE *and* FRANK.

ALICE.

Nay, but, Frank, if my father should find you here?

FRANK.

What would he do? Shoot me like a mad dog? or send for the police?——

ALICE.

You are merry!

FRANK.

Yes! I confess it!

ALICE.

For shame, Frank—and I going to be married to-morrow!

FRANK.

I shall be merrier than ever, if you talk so!

ALICE.

What can you mean?

FRANK.

Listen! To-night, when everybody is asleep but you and I,—lovers, you know, never sleep—a handful of gravel thrown against your casement,—a rope ladder—you descend into my arms, and our troubles are at an end!——

ALICE.

I will not run away, even with you!

FRANK.

But you do'nt—that's the beauty of it—I run away with you!——

ALICE.

Nay, I am serious! If my father, when he hears what a wretch this Count is, still persists—I must obey him!

FRANK.

What! obey your father when he orders you to be miserable for life?

ALICE.

Yes, Frank! even then! I promised my mother, on her dying bed, to obey him always, and I will keep my promise! If neither you nor Walter can devise some way to set me free, I sign the Deed that gives me to the man I loathe!—But I hear my father—let us withdraw! Quick!

[*exeunt* ALICE *and* FRANK.

Enter WALTER *and the* BANKER.

WALTER.

He is a Gamester.

BANKER.

I don't believe it.

WALTER.

Look at that. [*shows him the I. O. U.*

BANKER.

An I. O. U. for five thousand pounds! How came you by this?

WALTER.

I won it from the Count de Sidley.

BANKER.

You play?

WALTER.

To unmask a villain, and save my sister!——

BANKER.

The Count will reform—he shall,—I will make him promise to give it up. All people of Fashion do gamble a little.—Pooh! pooh! you have no knowledge of the world!

WALTER.

Thank Heaven! I have not. For what is it but to praise Virtue in public, and practise Vice in secret,—to gain a character for Truth by never being "detected" in a Lie,—to take advantage of the generous and open, because, if you do not, some other knave will,—to hang like a leech on your rich "acquaintances," and shun your poor "relations" like carrion,—to press favours on the affluent and refuse common courtesies to the needy,—to marry for a purse, live generally respected, and die universally lamented; to have homilies preached in your praise, and flatteries carved upon your tombstone. No, father, Heaven be thanked, I have no knowledge of the world!

BANKER.

Bless me—what a sermon! But, if the Count give up Play you must acknowledge there will be no objection to this match —this splendid match.

WALTER.

He is a libertine! One of those, who, conscious of their own foul hearts, believe all others like themselves.

BANKER.

Take care; take care, Sir, what you say!

WALTER.

You may prove it yourself to-night. He has plotted to entrap a lady—an orphan—to his house—has wagered she will come. Read that. [*gives him the memorandum.*

BANKER. (*aside.*)

Confusion! This is villainous indeed! (*aloud.*) Yet, perhaps, 'tis but a freak!

WALTER.

A quotation from the Aristocratic Bible! The poor man's Crime is but the rich man's Freak!

BANKER.

He will give up these excesses,—

WALTER.

No, Sir! His vices grow more numerous with his years.

BANKER.

I cannot break my word; be he all this and worse!

WALTER

I had rather see the Altar changed to my sister's Grave, than she should wed this man. She shall not—she will not obey you.

BANKER.

You little know your sister—she will obey me!

WALTER. (*aside.*)

A last resource—his Pride! (*aloud.*) One of the Count's friends—his intimate friends—jeered at you—told me the Count was going to marry some foolish old Banker's daughter, to fill an empty purse.

BANKER.

The name of this friend?

WALTER.

Sir Charles Slang!

BANKER.

Oh! then, I don't believe a word of it; besides, are not his Title-deeds in my possession? Large estates in Normandy ——

WALTER.

Forgeries!

BANKER.

Nay! you carry your dislike too far. A man of his high Rank guilty of Forgery! For shame!—for shame!

WALTER.

All crimes are near akin! The man that shrinks not from the ruin of an unprotected girl, will feel small compunction at a fraud—let him be who he may—or Peasant, Duke, or King! Vice levels all. Disguise yourself, and come with me to-night. He will show himself a Libertine in all his glory.

BANKER.

Well! I will go.

WALTER.

I will take occasion to mention, that you are a Moneylender. You will then see him as he is, and judge the value of his French estates.

BANKER.

Surely he cannot have so deceived me! When shall we go?

WALTER.

Between ten and eleven! I will prepare your disguise.

BANKER.

If I have pledged my word to a villain, I shall never be able to look you in the face again ——

WALTER.

Nay, father, it will be for him to hide his face. We will expose him. There can be no obligation—no promise binding in a case like this ——

BANKER.

My word is pledged. I gave him my hand upon it,—I cannot break my word! A Banker's word! [*exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Room in a Tavern.

Enter MR. BROWN *and Waiter.*

BROWN.

Has Mr. Hallam arrived?

WAITER.

No, Sir!

BROWN.

Nor A B C?

WAITER.

No, Sir!

BROWN.

What sort of a looking man is this A B C, eh, waiter? Anything like X Y Z, eh?

WAITER.

A B C, like X Y Z, Sir? Beg pardon, but I don't take ——

BROWN.

Oh! you don't! Then take yourself off ——

WAITER.

What a strange fellow! Take dinner, Sir?

BROWN.

No!

WAITER.

Morning paper, Sir?

BROWN.

No!

WAITER.

What then, Sir?

BROWN.

A pint of A B C, and draw it X Y Z.

WAITER.

Half-and-half, Sir—yes, Sir—he 's mad. [*exit* WAITER.

BROWN.

A B C, and X Y Z!! I wish Mr. Hallam would come! Hang me, if all the letters in the paper don't swim before my eyes, all turned into great staring A B C's, and X Y Z's.

Enter WAITER *and* FRANK.

WAITER.

Yes, Sir—all right—I perfectly understand, Sir! Make a funny waiter, tho', Sir. He ordered me just now, Sir, to draw him a pint of A B C, Sir. [*exit* WAITER.

FRANK.

Poor fellow! It's enough to bewilder one 's brains losing a thousand pounds, isn 't it, Brown; and such a widow—so amiable and sweet tempered, eh?

BROWN.

La! Don 't joke, Sir! I can 't raise a smile for the life of me. I despair of A B C 's turning out to be X Y Z.

FRANK.

Well! we can only try the experiment! I have bribed the

waiter to let you take his place. When I ring, you enter; if you recognise him, shake hands with him immediately, and in five minutes we shall get the Bill back. I have got a policeman hard by; if he resists, off he goes.

BROWN.

Capital! Capital! All we want is the real X Y Z.

FRANK.

Now be off, and mind he does 'nt catch a glimpse of you before he walks into the trap.

BROWN.

Oh! never fear. I 'll hide as close as a mouse till the bell rings! [*exit* BROWN.

(*The* WAITER *crosses the stage.*)

FRANK.

Will A B C be here soon?

WAITER.

I expect him every minute, Sir. He always walks straight into this room. You will be sure to see him the moment he arrives. [*exit* WAITER.

(FRANK *reads the paper.*)

Enter the COUNT *as* A B C.

FRANK.

Ah! here he is! (*rising.*) I believe I speak to A B C?

COUNT.

Very much at your service, Sir! Warm walking to-day, Sir!

FRANK.

It is, indeed, Sir; and you seem to have made some haste ——

COUNT.

Why, yes! we Capitalists are obliged to be in so many places almost at one and the same time, that really, some-

times, one can hardly help being a little late. I was detained at the Great Botany Bay Emigration Board.

FRANK. (*aside.*)

He has just come from Diddle street!

COUNT.

There is quite a rush to Australia now—it is almost a privilege to get transported. Heigho! The Old Bailey is the ruin of Emigration Companies!

FRANK. (*aside.*)

Yes,—the Old Bailey transports the Directors themselves!

COUNT.

But to business. You want a Government situation, I presume?

FRANK.

I do?

COUNT.

Of £.250 sterling per annum, paid quarterly, in advance.

FRANK.

Exactly!

COUNT.

Then I 'm your man.

FRANK.

I 've not the least doubt of it.

COUNT.

It is the simplest transaction in the world. I know a Nobleman—indeed, I have numerous connections among the Aristocracy. Well! I recommend you to him; he recommends you to the Minister in whose gift this snug little berth is, and your business is done.

FRANK. (*aside.*)

Done, indeed!

COUNT.

There is of course "the consideration."

FRANK.

Yes—that is mentioned in the advertisement.

COUNT.

A paltry thousand—for which you get, let me see—just 25 per cent for life. The bonus may be paid either in hard cash down—which is the preferable way, or by Bill to order payable at three months.

FRANK.

Excellent, but is the situation an easy one?—no tremendous, awful responsibility?

COUNT.

A mere sinecure, connected with a house rent free, and you are exactly the sort of man the Government require.

FRANK.

Five minutes conversation can hardly give you an insight into my character.

COUNT.

Pardon me, but I have the eye of a Connoisseur, and I see you are an honest man.

FRANK.

This Office must have "some" duties?

COUNT.

None whatever. It is like the Prerogative Court. Those who are "*not*" paid do all the duties for those that "*are*."

FRANK.

A very nice arrangement indeed.

COUNT.

Mere pastime, Sir,—mere pastime, these Government Offices. You saunter to *business* at eleven, read the newspapers till one, then go to lunch — return at two—cut your nails till three, and you are then your own master for the rest

of the day. Your most arduous task will be to draw your salary!

FRANK.

Oh! It is just the thing then: I fear I *must* give you a Bill—I will ring for pen and ink, and a proper stamp.

COUNT.

I never go unprovided with stamps. If men will be children and fly kites, you know, ha! ha! ha!—why we money-lenders must be prepared. [FRANK *rings the bell.*] There is the stamp, Sir.

FRANK.

Ah! Then we will draw out the Bill immediately.

[*enter* BROWN *as Waiter. He drops the inkstand as soon as he sees the* COUNT, *and shakes hands with him.*

BROWN.

Ah! and who'd have thought of seeing you here—X Y Z?

FRANK.

A B C!

BROWN.

X Y Z,—I say X Y Z.

FRANK.

A B C,—I say A B C.

BROWN.

You see what I've come to—a Waiter—a poor Waiter—but how *are* you—and how is it I have not been gazetted yet?—your uncle the Duke is slow—devilish slow. I say, been to Diddle-street lately?

COUNT. (*laughing*),

Well! hang me, if this is not the best thing I ever saw in my life—damn me, Sir—(*to* BROWN). Give me your hand,

and your's! (*laughing with each of their hands in his.*) Capital! upon my soul! Capital! Capital!

FRANK.

Pardon me, but I don't think——

COUNT.

Ha! ha! ha! Beautiful, by Jingo! Done brown.

FRANK.

You are indeed, Mr. A B C.

BROWN.

My name 's "Brown!"

COUNT.

Ha! ha! Capital! never knew a better!

FRANK.

We'll draw out *the* Bill immediately, if you please—(*points to the Count's pocket.*)

COUNT.

I wish I had it—the lord knows where it is now!——

FRANK.

Bless my soul! How hot the room is!—(*throws open the window, and a policeman is seen in the street.*)

COUNT.

Done again, by Jingo! Why, Sir, you should set up for a thief-taker!

BROWN.

I think he is something in that line now.

COUNT.

Ah! now I recollect—I have *not* yet circulated the little Bill you mention—ha! yes! here it is! (*hands it to* BROWN.) There, Sir! Having now made restitution, I suppose I may depart without the escort of that very respectable gentleman in blue.

FRANK.

As soon as you please—but remember, Sir, that whatever his disguise may be, I shall always retain a most particularly

vivid recollection of the very handsome features of A B C, alias X Y Z. [*exit* COUNT, *bowing.*

BROWN.

Huzzah! Huzzah! My precious Kitty shall change her name to Brown. Oh! Mr. Hallam—how can I thank you—I am so agitated! Do you wonder I was taken in? Is'nt he a downright gentleman? What a pair of mustachios too? I shall never believe a hairy man again.

FRANK.

Ha! ha! I told you all along that A B C and X Y Z were one.

BROWN.

Do you think you ought to have let him go? For my part, I would have had him tarred and feathered, and paraded through the streets, as a caution to all rogues, with a large placard on his back with "Bill Stealers, Beware" on it in letters a foot long.

FRANK.

You had better make haste with the good news to Mrs. Tomkins.

BROWN.

And so I will, and you must come too—and if she gives you a kiss for all your kindness, I promise you I won't be jealous. We have got the Bill. Huzzah! Huzzah!

[*Enter Waiter.*

Get out of the way.—The Bill! The whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill! Huzzah! Huzzah!

[*pushes* FRANK *off, and upsets the Waiter.*

End of Act III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A brilliantly lighted Room at the COUNT'S. *Supper Table laid out.*

Enter the COUNT.

COUNT.

A B C—X Y Z. I can't get it out of my head, for the life of me. To be done by a couple of honest fools!—lucky they let me go! It is full time I discontinued running such remarkable risks!—Egad! the Banker's daughter, or his money, which is the same thing, will save me from going to the diggings at the Government expense. It must be ten, surely; (*rings the bell*)—and in another hour I shall be quits with Mr. Stockchild! Confound the fellow—who would have thought of a man in the nineteenth century staking five thousand pounds on a woman's reputation. Verily the age of Chivalry is not yet past!—(*enter* SCAMP.) Scamp! listen to my orders! When the lady, whom I shortly expect, arrives at the door—let the room be darkened immediately—*that* will be our signal to be silent, and, thinking I am alone, she will quietly follow you up stairs! I shall advance to meet her, saying, "Welcome, fair lady, the culprit stands before

you!" At these words, Scamp, let the lights blaze forth again, and my triumph will be complete! Do you understand me?

SCAMP.

Perfectly. [*exit* SCAMP.

(*Enter* SIR PETER.)

COUNT.

Ah! Sir Peter! how are you? Glad to see you punctual!

SIR PETER.

Always am to dinner, supper, and all that sort of thing! Will the lady come?

COUNT.

Come! Of course she will ——

SIR PETER.

I thought so. How Stockchild, who really plays a good game of Écarté, could be so glaringly green as to stake money upon a woman's virtue, and all that sort of thing, I cannot conceive!

(*Enter* SLANG *and* SLASH.)

SLANG.

How do? De Sidley?—Does she come?

COUNT.

Read, and judge for yourself. (*gives the note.*)

SLANG. (*reading.*)

Egad—you're a lucky dog—and the note is rather warm than otherwise—isn't it, Slash?

SLASH.

Affectionate, 'pon my soul!

SLANG. (*to* SIR PETER, *slapping him on the back.*)

Well! old boy, and how is the rheumatic gout?

SIR PETER.

The what?

SLANG.

The rheumatic gout.

SIR PETER. (*turning away.*)

I'll be damned if I know—never had such an antiquated disease in my life!

SLANG.

Then Dr. Scrufemore lies most infernally, for he told me to-day that you ought not to leave your bed for a fortnight; and, by your limping so, one would think there was a *spavin* somewhere.

SLASH. (*looking at him through an eyeglass.*)

Decidedly lame, 'pon my soul.

(*Enter* WALTER *and* BANKER *as* MR. STOCKCHILD *and* MR. SOLOMON MOSES.)

WALTER. (*to* COUNT.)

You will, I hope, pardon the liberty I have taken in bringing a friend with me. Let me present him—Mr. Solomon Moses—The Count de Sidley. Mr. Moses, this is Sir Peter Pimpleton—Sir Charles Slang—Sir Harry Slash.

BANKER.

Your servant, gentlemen.

SIR PETER.

Egad! It's the great Money-lender. There's nothing like taking advantage of a good opportunity. Pray, Mr. Moses, what is the present state of the money market?

BANKER.

Flat, Sir Peter, flat. First-rate paper ought to be discounted at 10 per cent.

SIR PETER.

The Panic, I suppose?

BANKER.

Yes! The Panic!

SIR PETER.

Well! I suppose I must bow to circumstances; could you do me a few hundreds at that rate?

BANKER.

On what security?

SIR PETER.

Oh! Pimpleton Hall, of course!

BANKER.

Pimpleton! Pimpleton! Let me look!—(*pulls out a note book.*)—P— P— P——

SIR PETER.

I wonder what he means by P P P. Particularly Pretty Property, perhaps?

BANKER. (*reading.*)

Pimpleton Hall—County Bucks—3000 acres ——

SIR PETER. (*delighted.*)

Yes! that's it! P P P, Particularly Pretty Property—magnificent ——

BANKER.

You go too fast, Sir Peter ——

SIR PETER.

Confound it, I know I do. Young blood ——

BANKER.

There 's a little memorandum here ——

SIR PETER.

About the Mines, I suppose, and all that sort of thing.

BANKER.

No—about the Mortgages, and all that sort of thing.

SIR PETER. (*turning away.*)

Oh then, I 'm done! Confound it, everybody seems to know my affairs as well as they do their own!

BANKER.

You forget that the terms are synonymous—*Your* affairs are their own!

SCAMP. (*coming forward.*)

Supper is served.

COUNT. (*to all.*)

Before we take our seats, let me give you one caution. Young ladies, especially in certain situations, are apt to be bashful; when our guest approaches, therefore, the room will be darkened, we must then preserve perfect silence. You agree to this, Mr. Stockchild, as you know the lady is invited to sup with one gentleman, not with half-a-dozen.

WALTER.

Oh! of course; nothing can be fairer!

COUNT.

Then, now to supper.

BANKER. (*aside.*)

How could I be so blind? [*all seat themselves.*

WALTER.

Is it true, Count, that you are going to be married to a Banker's daughter?

COUNT.

Alas! yes! But I am determined to enjoy my bachelor life to the last moment. You see, Mr. Moses, I could not well get out of it—the banker is mad for a Title, and I, I confess, have no objection to a Million! A mere matter of barter! The old plebeian sells me his daughter, with a pocket full of guineas, for the conjugal half of my Title. Why, what's the matter, Mr. Moses? one would think it was *your* money I was going to walk off with!

BANKER. (*recovering.*)

And the young lady?——

COUNT.

Will accommodate herself to circumstances, as women generally do in this world! High rank—splendid carriages—costly dresses—superb diamonds and plenty of gentlemen acquaintances are all that a married woman of sense requires to be perfectly happy.

SLANG.

Ha! ha! The Count is a capital judge of the women!

BANKER. (*aside.*)

And this monster is to be my son-in-law!

COUNT.

But this is the cream of the joke, Mr. Moses:—The old gentleman fancies me a pattern of morality—Isn't it rich, eh?

BANKER.

Ha! ha! Capital! (*aside.*) Oh Lord!

SLANG.

De Sidley, a pattern of morality! I say, Count, do you mean to be at home to your father-in-law?

COUNT.

When I'm *hard up*, decidedly! His signature will be a set off against the nuisance of his society.

BANKER. (*aside.*)

Was ever such a villain!

SIR PETER.

The old cock fought shy of me—thought I was too young and giddy, and all that sort of thing.

SLANG.

Perhaps he had heard of the little encumbrances on Pimpleton Hall?

SIR PETER.

Damn Pimpleton Hall! It always stands in my way.

SLANG.

Well—it won't *stand* in your way much longer—for I hear it is shortly to be *knocked down*, to the highest bidder! ——

SLASH.

Going, going, gone! 'pon my soul!

COUNT.

Mr. Moses—champagne?

SLANG.

A glass of wine—Stockchild? To our noble entertainer's second matrimonial adventure. (*to* MOSES). He popped the first into her grave in less than two years.

[*the* BANKER *half rises.*

COUNT.

Why, Mr. Moses! you don't seem comfortable! My marriage is all in your favour. I shall once more have plenty of security to offer to obliging gentlemen of your calling! A bumper—gentlemen! a bumper to Mr. Solomon Moses—the most celebrated Money-lender in Europe, and may he have as many daughters as he has millions!

ALL.

Bravo! bravo!

SLANG.

If he has a score, he'll find plenty of Noblemen ready to take them off his hands!

SLASH. (*drinking.*)

The Misses Moseses, 'pon my soul!

BANKER. (*aside.*)

This is beyond bearing!

WALTER. (*aside.*)

Humour the joke, or you will be discovered!

BANKER. (*aside.*)

Damned set of scoundrels! (*aloud, rising.*) Gentlemen, I thank you for your good wishes, but, as for my millions, I assure you it is as much as I can do to pay my way, and find an odd hundred, now and then, to put out to good interest on decent security!

COUNT.

Damn the modesty of Money lenders, I say! They never *are* rich, if you believe what they say! Come, Slang, give us a stave!

SIR PETER.

Aye! aye! A stave—and, apropos to our meeting, let it be something about the ladies—I love the ladies.

SLANG.

I am afraid the affection is not reciprocal, Sir Peter, or you would never have continued a bachelor at your time of life! But, to oblige you, I 'll give you a song in praise of that sex which always finds charms to attract, but cannot forge chains to detain inconstant and fickle Man!

Song.

I.

In this queer little spot, called the World, we may see
Some marvellous wonders, it must be confest!
But by far the most wonderful wonder to me
Is Woman—sweet Woman—transcends all the rest!

II.

The stars and the planets are lovely, 'tis true,
As they peer on this desolate Earth, from on high,
But the brightness that they give, is nothing at all
To the sparks that flash Love from a witching blue eye.

III.

The moon, as she smiles on a boisterous sea,
Seems to woo, with her kisses, the waters to rest!
But the wild storms which rage in the heart of a *Man*,
May be stilled by the smile of the girl he loves best!

ALL.

Bravo! bravo! [*the room is darkened—all are silent.*

Enter SCAMP *with* LADY ELLEN, *closely veiled.*

COUNT. (*taking her by the hand.*)

Welcome, fair lady! the culprit stands before you. (*the lights blaze forth.*) Now, Mr. Stockchild, we are quits!

[*unveils the lady, who stands revealed—the* COUNT'S *niece!*

LADY ELLEN.

Uncle?

[*all laugh, and* WALTER *holds out the I O U before the disappointed* COUNT *in triumph!*

Tableau.

End of Act IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Room at the Banker's. Door R. *in a recess.*

WALTER *and* FRANK *discovered.*

WALTER.

In spite of all he has seen, my father will persist in keeping his word to the Count.

FRANK.

A Gamester? A Libertine?

WALTER.

What matter that? He fancies the roué will reform, and, with that sickly sort of charity which often applauds even Crime itself, talks of judging one's fellow-creatures too harshly; says, there would be few marriages, if Gamesters and Libertines were condemned to celibacy,—and thinks his word of *honour*, as he terms it, of far more consequence than his child's happiness. He is, in fact, a man of the World, who will find, in his daughter's Title, the lustre of which will partly shine on himself, ample consolation for all the misery which *she* will have to bear entirely alone.

FRANK.

What in the world then is to be done?

WALTER.

Can you not persuade her to be disobedient?

FRANK.

Alas! no! She has received what they call a classical education; confound the Age which teaches women History, I say: she talks of the fortitude of the Romans, and the frightful punishments due to filial disobedience! What is to be done?

WALTER.

Take the matter into your own hands; the Deeds are to be signed in half-an-hour. Should the Count be proof against all the indignities I shall heap upon him, and still maintain his claim, destroy those Deeds! To prepare others, will require time; and as by delay Fabius saved the state, so by the same means you may save my sister and gain your mistress!

FRANK.

A capital idea! Destroy the Deeds! Capital!

WALTER.

You can at all events try the experiment. When the Count is about to sign, I will knock at that door. Does the Count know you?

FRANK.

No! I have never seen him.

WALTER.

So much the better. He will be the more astounded at your impudence.

FRANK.

Well then, that is settled. When you knock, I enter and destroy the Deeds! I suppose they can only transport me for it; and, if I am to lose Alice, I shall not regret a voyage to the Antipodes!

WALTER.

Destroy the Deeds; and, in a day or two, perhaps, we may be able to persuade her to be less obstinate.

FRANK.

I have no hope, she is so good a daughter.

WALTER.

Well, never mind, a good daughter will not make a bad wife.

FRANK.

Poor consolation, when she seems more likely to become the Count's wife than mine.

WALTER.

Nay, be of good cheer. By the time a second lot of deeds are made out (Lawyers are the thieves of Time, if not of goods, chattels, messuages, and hereditaments,) I do not despair of making her alter her resolution.

FRANK.

By-the-bye, Walter, has this hard-hearted old man consented to your own marriage?

WALTER.

Yes! As soon as he heard of Lady Ellen's elopement, he said I might marry a Hottentot if I pleased, and I mean to present her to him this morning.

FRANK.

What, the Hottentot?

WALTER.

You shall judge for yourself. Meanwhile, I leave you to your meditations, but be sure you are all attention for the signal. [*exit.*

FRANK. (*putting a chair close to the door in the recess.*)

Never fear! and, if the Count resist the destruction of the cursed papers, why damn me if I 'm not just in the humour to tear him in pieces too! [FRANK *exits into the recess.*

SCENE II.

Banker's Library. Table—Papers.
Door at back. Doors R. *and* L.

BANKER, WALTER, ALICE, GRIFFITH.

WALTER.

You are still obdurate—determined.

BANKER.

I am!

WALTER.

Remember! father! A child's happiness should be dearer to you even than your pride. As to your pledged word—in any good man's sight, the vices of this Nobleman are sufficient to exonerate you from all breach of faith! If good men approve your conduct, why, let who may condemn!

BANKER.

I am firm—steeled against all your arguments—your sophistries. I confess, I should gladly see this marriage broken off!—but it cannot be through me—I never did, and never will retract my plighted word! I would keep it, Walter, did it consign my daughter to her grave, and not to honourable marriage!——

ALICE.

Honourable? Father! This marriage is worse than Death! Am I to swear before the Highest to cherish the man I loathe? Am I to stand at the altar a perjured wretch? Am I to live a joyless life—days spent in self-reproach—and nights in tears—and all for my obedience? Is my devotion to become my ruin, my torture,—my despair? Oh! Father—Father—set thy daughter free!——

BANKER. (*aside.*)

'Tis past—I am resolved! Lose a Noble son-in-law for a few peccadilloes—never! (*aloud.*) Alice! you must wed

the Count—I have pledged my word, and, depend upon it, when all these nonsensical, romantic, school-girl associations are out of your head, you will lead a very happy life, indeed, as the wife of a Nobleman, with the finest rent-roll in France! As for his faults, you shall hear his repentance! However, if the Count resign you—you are free. (*aside.*) But if he does, I'll believe in man no more!

WALTER.

Hear *me*, Sir!

BANKER.

Not a word! "*You*" have my consent to marry whom you please—leave this affair to me!——Are the Deeds ready, Griffith?—No sentence wrongly placed to breed dispute hereafter?

GRIFFITH.

All ready, Sir! (*aside.*) Would they were at the bottom of the Red Sea! [*Enter from door at back, the* COUNT, SIR PETER, SLANG, SLASH,—*all are silent.*

SLANG.

Confound it! we have dropped into a Quaker's meeting by mistake!

SLASH.

Quakers, 'pon my soul!

SIR PETER. (*aside.*)

I smell a rat—the Banker has had an interview with the policeman.

COUNT.

Cold welcome this, Banker, for a son in-law!—you have not changed your mind?

BANKER.

I have good cause for receiving you thus coldly, but it shall never be said that Abel Monmouth broke his word!——If, after you have heard my son, you still will have my daughter for your wife, why take her!——

COUNT.

To you, Sir, then it seems that I am referred for an explanation ——

WALTER.

Which you shall have, Count de Sidley! In the first place, my father knows that you are a Gamester.—There is an I O U I won of you myself!

COUNT.

You won of me?

WALTER.

Do you not recognise Mr. Stockchild?

COUNT.

And which, pray, do you consider the more disgraceful action of the two, to enter a gentleman's house under an assumed name, or to play? Besides, Sir, you forget,—are you not a Gamester, too?

WALTER.

No, Count! I played with you to unmask you! (*tears up the I O U.*) The proof lies there!—Do Gamesters tear such little documents?

SIR CHARLES.

We are going back to the Arabian Nights, positively!

SLANG.

Quite Owiental, 'pon my soul!

COUNT.

This is too ridiculous, to ask a man to give up his wife because he plays! I'll give up cards if your father wishes it.—(*aside.*) I hope he has not told him about that other little affair!

WALTER.

In the second place, Count de Sidley, you are a Libertine! My father knows your infamy, and your right-well-merited disgrace!——

656856 A

COUNT. (*to* WALTER.)

Confusion! I must say, Mr. Monmouth, I consider you have behaved in a very dishonourable manner in thus betraying the little secret you speak of.—When gentlemen become informers ——

WALTER.

My father was present and had only to judge for himself.

COUNT. (*aside.*)

How could I be so blind!——

SLANG.

What? you the little Money-lender—better and better!

SLASH.

Good as a play, 'pon my soul!

PIMPLETON. (*aside.*)

This accounts for his very minute information about Pimpleton Hall—and be d—d to him.

COUNT. (*aside.*)

I must brazen it out. (*aloud.*) Well! what then? Is it a crime to trap a pretty girl? (*sneering.*) As *you* seem so much interested in her, I am ready to give you the satisfaction of a man of Honour!

WALTER.

And expiate one crime by committing another? No, Count, the satisfaction of a man of honour you *shall* give me, but in a different way! (*leads in* ADELE L. *door.*) Murder is *your* court of Appeal—Justice is *mine!* Apologise!

COUNT. (*muttering.*)

I—I ——

WALTER.

Do you hesitate? Apologise ——

COUNT. (*to* ADELE.)

Lady, I crave your pardon ——

ADELE.

You have it—*Count* de Sidley!

PIMPLETON.

Bless my soul, so late; and I have to ride with Lady Ann in half an hour.—(*aside.*) A man of honour, and *apologise*—horrible! [*exit.*

SLANG.

Come, Slash, our reputation is at stake!

SLASH.

Howwible, 'pon my soul! [*exeunt.*

WALTER.

Now, Count de Sidley, that even your *friends* have left you—tho' you are disgraced in their eyes by the only honourable action you have been guilty of since I have had the pleasure of knowing you,—Will you still persist in making that obstinate old man the instrument of his daughter's misery?—Speak!——

COUNT.

Nay, if I am to be thus humiliated—if my character be held so debased—a rich wife will go a long way to mend it, at least in the eyes of the world!

BANKER.

You claim then the fulfilment of my promise?

COUNT.

I do! [WALTER *knocks at the door.*

BANKER.

You will leave off your bad habits?

COUNT.

I will!

BANKER.

Then I keep my word! There are the papers! Sign!

[*The* COUNT *goes to one end of the table, takes up a*

pen, and is proceeding to sign, when FRANK *lays his hands on the deeds from the opposite side. The* COUNT *looks up at the interruption, and they stare in amazement at each other.*

COUNT.

The game is up!

FRANK. (*to* COUNT.)

I am amazed! My dear friend, let me look at you. Yes, I declare; the same eyes,—same nose,—same mouth. Yes, the very same remarkably handsome features which I promised never to forget. I also have the eye of a Connoisseur, and I see you are—A B C,—X Y Z. Shall I send for a policeman, or Mr. Brown? No! I see you will rather release that lady. (*aloud.*) Perhaps you will have the kindness to throw those Deeds into that fire. [*The* COUNT *complies.*

WALTER.

I am all astonishment!

ALICE.

It is indeed marvellous! [*enter* MR. BROWN *and* KITTY.

BROWN.

La! Mr. Hallam, we are so glad we've found you—we heard you were here—your servant told us so—and we made so bold as to step even into a strange house to thank you. It's all right, we are married, safe enough, now!

KITTY.

Yes, Sir, and you don't know how happy you have made us! —•—

BROWN.

Speak for yourself, Kitty. But—la, Sir—only to think of your tricking that Mr. A B C, X Y Z. (*stumbles against the* COUNT,—*goes back to* KITTY.) My wigs and whiskers, Kitty, if there is 'nt the Swindler!

KITTY.

What, that dandy chap, with the white kids and moustachios —just let me get at him—

FRANK. (*preventing her.*)

Nay, Mrs. Brown, be quiet; leave him to me; I'll manage him.

WALTER.

Friends of yours, Frank? If you show them into this room, I think they 'll find some luncheon.

FRANK.

There, go in, there 's dear creatures.

KITTY. (*going.*)

La! I should have liked just to have stuck my claws in him.

BROWN. (*going.*)

La! Kitty! don't talk in that savage way, or I shall wish——

KITTY. (*kissing him.*)

La! Tommy, don 't be a fool. [*exeunt* L.

WALTER.

Frank, you seem to have mesmerized the Count to-day.

FRANK.

Yes, and so I did the other day.

WALTER.

I thought you had never met before?

FRANK.

I was mistaken! we have met *once* before.—(*calling him just as he is about to escape.*) We have met *once* before?

COUNT.

Yes—and once too often.

FRANK.

Do you leave England?

COUNT.

Immediately!

FRANK.

And do not think of returning soon?

COUNT.

Never!

FRANK.

I wish you a pleasant voyage.

(*Enter* LADY ELLEN *and* LIONEL.)

LADY ELLEN.

Hope I don't intrude, Uncle, or spoil the family arrangements? Poor Lord Mountjoy!

LIONEL.

Is your Son-in-law——

COUNT.

I am glad of it.—Ellen will need a protector. (*to* ELLEN.) I am ruined and quit England. Farewell! (*aloud.*) Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you all a very good morning. [*exit* COUNT.

LADY ELLEN.

Ruined? Nay, then it is no time for friends to desert him—Come, Lionel! [*exeunt* LADY ELLEN *and* LIONEL.

(*Enter* BROWN *and* KITTY.)

BROWN.

Why, A B C has vanished! Gone to Diddle Street!

FRANK.

Hush! Be quiet.

WALTER.

Why, Frank, you are a perfect wizard!

FRANK.

Mere Mesmerism, I assure you—the secret of which shall be explained, when you will all allow that this Count is even worse than he seems!

BANKER.

But he is a Count?

FRANK.

Better—far better, a Chevalier—(*whispers to* BANKER)—of Industry.

BANKER.

Thank Heaven, I have been spared this disgrace; and to you, Mr. Hallam, my thanks are due, that even now my eyes are opened to the truth. If you love this girl of mine, take her, and may you both be as happy as you deserve. As for me, I am ashamed of myself. Alice—girl, can you forgive your father?

ALICE.

Nay, let us never speak of this again!

[ALICE *and* FRANK *retire up.*

BANKER.

But I forget Walter. Walter, where is your chosen one?

WALTER. (*presenting* ADELE.)

She is here, Sir; but I warn you that she is without Wealth.

BANKER.

Rubbish!

WALTER.

Or Title.

BANKER.

Fiddle-de-dee! Her name?

ADELE.

My name, Sir, is St. Clair. My father ——

BANKER.

Your father is a merchant of Marseilles.

ADELE.

You knew my father, Sir?

BANKER.

Knew him? Well! In early days, he was my dearest friend. A twelvemonth gone, he wrote me word he should shortly sail for England.

ADELE.

Alas, Sir! we were wrecked, and I alone escaped!

BANKER.

Poor St. Clair! but, I thank Heaven, Providence has placed it in my power to serve his child. Do you love this boy of mine?

ADELE.

Remember, I have nothing ——

BANKER.

Nothing? You have Everything! Is Virtue nothing?—Beauty nothing?—Youth nothing? You have everything but a husband, and that I am going to give you.

[*he joins* WALTER *and* ADELE.

(BROWN *suddenly kisses* KITTY. *All laugh.*)

FRANK.

Why, Mr. Brown, you are in a hurry to bill and coo ——

BROWN.

La! Sir, do 'nt pray use the word Bill; I shall never see or hear B I L L again without trembling ——

GRIFFITH. (*rubbing his hands.*)

Well, Sir, was 'nt I right?

BANKER.

You were indeed, Griffith; I have been taught, even in my old age, a useful lesson; I shall always remember, that, although Wealth, Pomp, and Power may gratify the Passions, they cannot bring Contentment to the Heart.

WALTER.

No! Father.—The Peasant is often happier than the Prince; and he alone is truly wise, who, amid the rubs and storms of life, pursues the even tenor of his way, unscathed by Envy, and unmoved by Pride, and who, inheriting the image of his God, views with a lofty pity the false ambition of the World, and scorns to take any part in

" THE TRICKS OF THE TIME! "

NAPOLEON'S FIRST LOVE;

OR,

THE BLUE BEAR OF NANGIS!

An Historical Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

NAPOLEON'S FIRST LOVE;

OR,

THE BLUE BEAR OF NANGIS!

An Historical Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

Prem.

" Within the last four years, a gentleman in France left a " sum of money in his Will, to be spent in an annual dinner " for six of the most esteemed of his friends; which circum- " stance it is necessary should be known for the complete " understanding of this Historical Drama."

A Lapse of Seventeen Years takes place between the Acts.

Dramatis Personæ.

ACT I.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, *Lieutenant of Artillery.*
COUNT DE PASSY, *of the old Régime.*
M. BRETEUIL,
M. DE CARRIER,
COUNT D'ESPREMENIL,
MARQUIS DE MENEVAL,
} *Friends of the deceased M. Laporte.*
JEAN JOMINI, *Landlord of the "Blue Bear."*
FRANÇOIS, *Waiter of ditto.*
MADAME DE COLOMBIER, *Sister of the late M. Laporte.*
CECILE, *her Daughter.*

A LAPSE OF SEVENTEEN YEARS.

ACT II.

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON, *of the new Régime.*
COUNT DE PASSY, *of no Régime at all.*
JEAN JOMINI, *Landlord of the "Blue Bear."*
GENERAL FRANÇOIS MUIRON, *A. D. C. to the Emperor.*
MARTIN, *Waiter at the "Blue Bear."*
DELABORDE, *a Chouan Conspirator.*
ROGUET, *a Thief and a Money Lender.*
ADRIEN, *Principal Chevalier d'Industrie.*
CECILE, *a Countess in difficulties.*

Thieves, Soldiers, Ragamuffins, etc.

Scene—Paris, and Nangis.

Time—1*st Act*, 1787.——2*nd*, 1804.

Napoleon's First Love.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Room at the Blue Bear. Table laid for Seven.
The names painted on the backs of the chairs as follows:—

M. LAPORTE—President.

COUNT DE PASSY,	M. BRETEUIL,
M. BONAPARTE,	M. CARRIER,
COUNT D'ESPREMENIL,	MARQUIS DE MENEVAL.

Landlord and François discovered.

JEAN JOMINI.

Well, well! this old M. Laporte was the oddest, most whimsicallest, drollest old gentleman—ha! ha! ha! The idea of a man's celebrating his Birthday after the worms have walked off with him, and becoming the invisible President of a table of Ghosts!—truly a most comical idea—I shall never get over it—ha! ha! ha!

FRANÇOIS. (*solemnly.*)

But, Master Jomini, suppose the ghost of the old gentle-

man, I mean M. Laporte, should appear visibly in that chair, you would 'nt laugh then, I 'll lay a wager.

JEAN JOMINI.

Eh! what? a ghost visible! Oh, François, the very idea makes one shudder!

FRANÇOIS.

I thought I 'd soon stop your laughing!

JEAN JOMINI.

Pooh! nonsense! I 'm not afraid—afraid! pooh! If a ghost was even to tap me on the shoulder, I should only think it funny and laugh—ha! ha! ha! (FRANÇOIS *blows the candle out and taps him smartly on the shoulder.*) Eh! eh! what 's that?—why it 's dark, François.—François—Oh, Lord! what will become of me! My tongue clings to the roof of my mouth! ——

FRANÇOIS. (*lighting the candle with a match.*)

I thought you were 'nt afraid of ghosts—why, you 're afraid of me—in the dark!

JEAN JOMINI. (*snatching the candle.*)

But not in the light, you rascal! and if you ever play me such a trick again, I 'll make you repent it, I promise you! (*kicks out* FRANÇOIS.) Afraid of ghosts, indeed! (*sits unconsciously in the President's chair.*) Ah! here's the old gentleman's Will! (*reading.*) "On the 4th of every October, as long " as the world remains unburnt"—that seems an unlimited period, truly!—" dinner shall be laid for seven, at the Blue " Bear, at Nangis, kept at present"—at present! hum! mine 's a pretty good life, I should think!—" by one honest " Jean Jomini;"—honest Jean Jomini! ha! that 's better worded!—" kept at present by one honest Jean Jomini; six " of the chairs shall, while the parties are alive, be thus " corporeally filled, viz., by my six friends: the Count de

" Passy, M. Bonaparte, M. Breteuil, M. de Carrier, the Count " d'Espremenil, and the Marquis de Meneval; the seventh, " or Presidential chair, I shall occupy myself." The deuce you will; ha! ha! ha! that's a good joke! Why, I myself, am sitting in it; ha! ha! ha!

[*enter* FRANÇOIS *behind* J. JOMINI—*starts at seeing the chair occupied, and drops the tray of glass which he is carrying.*

FRANÇOIS.

Oh, Lord! There 's the ghost.

JEAN JOMINI. (*jumping up.*)

Oh, Lord! There 's the ghost.

JEAN JOMINI. (*seeing* FRANÇOIS.)

Why, you dolt! you good-for-nothing! how dare you frighten me so?

FRANÇOIS.

How dare you sit in the ghost's chair, then, and frighten *me* so? Perhaps you 've been sitting on his knee.

JEAN JOMINI.

Oh, Lord, François! don't talk in that way. I confess I 'm afraid of ghosts—I do indeed; so do 'nt, pray!

FRANÇOIS.

It 's in the room somewhere, you may depend upon it. But I say, Master —— [*whispers.*

JEAN JOMINI. (*whispering.*)

Well, François—well ——

FRANÇOIS.

Hush! hush! I say, do you think the ghost will get funny?

JEAN JOMINI.

Why?

FRANÇOIS.

Old M. Laporte always did.

JEAN JOMINI.

Faith, that 's true—he was a jovial old chap over a bottle.

FRANÇOIS.

Over a dozen, you mean.

JEAN JOMINI.

Well, never mind; as the ghost has paid for the wine, the ghost may get funny if he likes, with all my heart.

FRANÇOIS.

You think he—I mean *It*, will get funny, *then?*

JEAN JOMINI.

I should 'nt wonder if it did, but what then?

FRANÇOIS.

What then? why, we shall have to carry it up to bed, sha 'nt we? We always had old M. Laporte, you know.

JEAN JOMINI.

Phsa! François; you are superstitious! There! get the table for the living, do, and don 't talk any more of the dead.

FRANÇOIS.

There 's another little point I want to speak to you about, Master Jean Jomini; I begin to think I shall have to leave.

JEAN JOMINI.

Leave! why? you are well treated, are 'nt you?

FRANÇOIS.

Oh yes! my place is good enough, very good for the matter of that—but I think of—(*his voice sinks into a whisper,*)—that *future* time when these seven ghosts are to be served by you, the ghost of a landlord, and waited upon by me, the ghost of a waiter! Now, you see, in common situations, when one died

one might expect a respite from one's labours, but in this it seems impossible; so I fear that I must give you warning.

JEAN JOMINI.

Hum! that is a knotty point—I think I'd better resign too, at that rate; but here comes the Count de Passy. We'll talk *that* over some other time; and now go and pick up the pieces, and see if dinner is 'nt nearly ready. (*musing.*) That is a knotty point, certainly!

[FRANÇOIS *exit, after picking up pieces.*

Enter COUNT.

Ha! Jean Jomini, my old boy, prince of landlords, and model of Blue Bears! what's the matter? Has the "Blue Bear" got the blue devils? [Phsa! man, you should be in the spirits that I am——

JEAN JOMINI.

Oh! M. le Count, don't talk of spirits, when perhaps there's one sitting in that very chair.

COUNT.

To be sure there is.

JEAN JOMINI.

Oh, Lord! is there? Where? [*turning round in alarm.*

COUNT.

And it's very rude of me not to have paid my respects to him before.—(*goes up to chair and bows.*) How do you do, M. Laporte? Pretty punctual you see, as usual. Glad to see me! I know you are, my dear old friend; and all I can say is, I am sorry I can't see you.

JEAN JOMINI.

And do you really think he is there, then?

COUNT.

To be sure; why not? Is there nothing in the world

invisible to the living? Why, you foolish Jomini, we only *think* we see what we *do* see.

JEAN JOMINI.

Oh! for the matter of that ——

COUNT.

Matter, my dear fellow—there 's no such thing as matter. I deny its existence; all modern philosophers do. Just look at that chair—tho' you imagine you sit upon it, you don't do any such thing; it 's not matter, it 's ——

JEAN JOMINI.

What is it? pray tell me!

COUNT.

Why, that 's the secret known only to those who are gone you know where. We mortals are all in the dark after all. (*pinches* JOMINI'S *arm.*) You think for instance that *that's* matter, eh?

JEAN JOMINI.

Oh! M. le Comte! Oh! oh! Yes; it is indeed, it is indeed—black and blue, black and blue ——

COUNT.

All imagination! You *fancy* you are hurt—that 's all. The pinch was associated in your mind in some incomprehensible manner with the abstract notion of pain ——

JEAN JOMINI.

You nearly abstracted a piece of the flesh ——

COUNT.

All imagination! The new philosophy has exploded matter.

JEAN JOMINI.

Then I think it's high time it exploded pain too. Oh! my arm!

COUNT. (*goes up.*)

Ah! here is my chair, with my name on it, and here sits ——

[*examines the chairs.*

JEAN JOMINI. (*rubbing his arm.*)

D——n the new Philosophy, I say! We only *think* we see what we *do* see—that 's another knotty point. I wonder what François will say to that?

COUNT.

Who is this? M. Bonaparte. What, my rival with Cecile. Poor little devil. Upon my soul, M. Laporte, you have selected your company admirably, with the exception of this little Corsican adventurer—he surely must be out of his element among the first gentlemen of France; know you why this little Artilleryman is one of the immortal six, Jean Jomini?

JEAN JOMINI.

Why, M. le Comte, because poor old M. Laporte was very partial to him—very partial to him indeed.

COUNT.

And what for, pray? his Pride, or his Poverty?

JEAN JOMINI.

No, M. le Comte; but for his skill in The Mathematics. The old gentleman often told me that there was more in that little lieutenant's brain than in the heads of all the rest of the Province put together.

COUNT.

Complimentary to the Province, truly! M. Laporte was a clever man, Jean Jomini!

JEAN JOMINI.

He was indeed! none but a clever man, and a very extraordinary clever man, too, would have thought of having his friends around him after he was gone.

COUNT.

Or ensured their attendance by a good dinner!

JEAN JOMINI.

And the best wines, at moderate prices. Poor old gentleman! Besides, you know, M. le Comte, the little lieutenant was reported to-be-about-to-be married to Mademoiselle Cecile.

COUNT.

You don't say so?

JEAN JOMINI.

A fact, I assure you; but I suppose the Wedding has been put off by the poor old gentleman's lamentable decease.

COUNT.

Jomini, you're a fool. Go and get up the Burgundy.

JEAN JOMINI.

Thank you, M. le Comte, thank you; I know I am, indeed I consider it a honour to be called so. I know nothing, positively nothing!

COUNT.

Yes, you do!

JEAN JOMINI.

Do I? What?

COUNT

Why, you said you knew you were a fool! In fact, you are a wise man, you "know yourself!"

JEAN JOMINI. (*confusedly.*)

True, I had forgot—certainly, in fact, M. le Comte, as you cleverly remarked just now, "we only *think* we see what we *do* see!" Oh Lord! these annual ghostly feasts will soon make a ghost of me; I shall mistake the black seal for the red seal, and then you will all have, in some incomprehensible manner, something more than an abstract notion of pain—you know where? Ah! ah!—I had you there!

[*exit laughing, and bowing to the five other guests who meet him.*

[*Enter* MENEVAL, BONAPARTE, D'ESPREMENIL, CARRIER, *and* BRETEUIL.]

MENEVAL.

Ah! de Passy! here first? mournful occasion, is 'nt it? I shall not be able to eat a morsel.

BONAPARTE. (*aside.*)

The greatest gourmand in France!

COUNT.

Pooh! pooh! nonsense! It appears to me the most delightful festival possible, where the fact of the chair's being taken by the ghost of an old friend warns us of the uncertainty of the future, and bids us make the most of the present. The only circumstance that makes me the least melancholy is, that I may happen to be the last survivor; then, indeed, gentlemen, when you are all mouldering in your graves ——

ALL.

Oh! oh!

COUNT.

When those features now blooming with health shall be honeycombed, shrivelled, and cold ——

ALL.

Oh! oh! oh!

COUNT.

Then, indeed, gentlemen, it will be hard, even for the mercurial spirits of the Count de Passy, to raise a laugh to the memory of his departed companions!

Enter JEAN JOMINI. (*with dishes.*)

Dinner is served, gentlemen.

D'ESPREMENIL.

Can you eat after that, Meneval?

MENEVAL.

I fell as if I was being eaten myself! [*all seat themselves.*

COUNT. (*after a pause.*)

Oh, hang it! this will never do! Come, boys, let us fulfil the last wishes of the testator; let us be merry or we shall have the ghost visibly before us, if we refuse to do justice to his hospitality.

D'ESPREMENIL.

Bravo! well said, and, to prevent an apparition so unpropitious to our appetites, I, for one, shall set to immediately! M. Bonaparte, what have you there?

BONAPARTE.

Grenouilles au Louis Quatorze!—Shall I send you some?

MENEVAL.

They look delicious ——

BONAPARTE.

But *you* have no appetite?

MENEVAL.

Nevertheless, I will trouble you, if you please.—I feel better!

COUNT.

What! Meneval, overcome your scruples already? If your appetite last not longer than your grief, you will fare but scantily!

BRETEUIL.

Ha! ha! Meneval, do you feel that?

BONAPARTE.

Feel! not he! you might cut off M. Meneval's leg without his knowing it, if his mouth were full! [*all laugh.*

MENEVAL. (*with his mouth full.*)

I beg your pardon, I didn't hear you; I'll talk to you by-and-bye!

DE CARRIER.

Any news from Paris to-day, Count?

COUNT.

Wonderful!

ALL—(*except* MENEVAL, *who is intent on his plate.*)

You don't say so! Pray give it us?

COUNT.

Wonderful! The Parisian mobocracy have gutted M. Reveillon's manufactory in the Rue Montreuil! The troops have slain a couple of hundreds of the vagabonds, and, all Paris is in an uproar ——

DE CARRIER.

It is reported that the Orleans family have something to do with it.

BONAPARTE.

Poor devils! they are always getting into some scrape or another! They will lose all their property some day, if they don't mind!

D'ESPREMENIL.

Touch the Orleans property! it would be a Crime!

BONAPARTE.

Crimes are committed *sometimes, even in France!*

COUNT.

Phsa, gentlemen! you 'll hear no more of it; it 's a regular storm in a teacup.

BONAPARTE.

You think so?

COUNT.

Yes, M. Bonaparte, and does not your Wisdomship agree with me? What says little Mathematics on the subject of this puny revolt?

BONAPARTE.

It is not a revolt, M. le Comte,—it is a Revolution!

ALL. (*laughing.*)

A Revolution! ha! ha! ha! Capital!

BONAPARTE.

Mark my words, gentlemen; two millions is a greater and more powerful quantity than two thousand;—when the two millions at present held in subjection and oppressed by the two thousand shall awake, the two thousand will be annihilated!

COUNT.

Ha! ha! ha! And you think the burning of a manufactory, and the slaughter of a score or two of canaille, constitute the commencement of a Revolution?

BONAPARTE.

I do! M. Reveillon's misfortune will be the Réveillée of France!

ALL.

Ha! ha! ha! Hear him! hear him!

COUNT.

Your opinion, M. Bonaparte, is a selfish one; *you* have nothing to lose, and so pretend to be one of the people.

BONAPARTE.

M. le Comte, I *am* one of the people. You with *your* title despise me, but I hold my rank more honourable, aye, and more lasting than yours; Kings may be dethroned; Counts may be disgraced; but *THE PEOPLE* live for ever! Mark my words, gentlemen—Counts have had their day!

ALL.

Ha! ha! Hear him!

COUNT.

Listen to the little Dictator,—the destroyer of Titles,—the Annihilator of hereditary Honours ——

BONAPARTE.

For luxurious and idle Oppressors, yes! For the gallant defenders of Freedom, never!

COUNT.

Who would imagine he was only a little Lieutenant of Artillery; why, his words are as big as his guns—ha! ha! ha!

ALL.

Ha! ha! ha! The Little Dictator!

BONAPARTE. (*stifling his rage.*)

M. le Comte, and you, *gentlemen!* an honest man is known by his company! I shall injure my character no further. (*retiring.*)—(*all laugh.*)—You laugh *now!* but let me assure you, that, when next we meet, either living or dead, at the "Blue Bear of Nangis," you will regret the day when you insulted M. Napoleon Bonaparte, your humble servant! [*exit.*

COUNT. (*mimicking.*)

The magnanimous Prince of Corsica, and most potent Lieutenant of Artillery!—(*all laugh.*)—Upon my word, I had no idea the little fellow was so diverting! A Revolution in France! ha! ha! too absurd, upon my soul!

DE CARRIER.

He has got some spirit in him, though!

COUNT

Spirit! I believe you! He 'll set fire to the Seine, if he ever goes to Paris.

D'ESPREMENIL.

Poor little devil! I suppose he is off to the Colombiers for consolation. De Passy, you had better look about you there.

COUNT.

Oh! it is all right. I want him to go there particularly this evening.

D'ESPREMENIL.

Indeed! and why, pray?

COUNT.

To be cured of his presumption! ha! ha! ha! It makes me laugh even to think of it. But it is a secret, gentlemen.

ALL.

Oh! of course.

COUNT.

Well then, you must know that, to punish him for his absurd pretensions, Cecile and I have agreed to play him a trick; she is to appoint him a meeting at midnight, in the summer-house at the end of the shrubbery; I am to meet him instead; and, by St. Denis, if you like, you may all of you join in the fun.

ALL.

Bravo! bravo! We will! we will!

COUNT.

Instead of folding in his arms his adorable mistress, we 'll all dance round him, and laugh him into the middle of next week.

ALL.

Capital! capital!

COUNT.

We 'll cure him of his love and his politics at the same time, by showing him how the Nobles of France chastise the insolence of little Corsican adventurers! (*Enter* JOMINI.) Well, Jomini Jean, my boy, what is it?

JOMINI.

This paper will inform you, M. le Comte, I was ordered to deliver it precisely at half-past eleven. It comes from *him.* (*pointing to the President's chair.*) [*exit* JOMINI.

COUNT.

Ah! I see it does! and that accounts for the absence of the post mark! (*reading.*) "My beloved friends ——

ALL.

Poor old fellow!

COUNT.

"I hereby command you, at each of our jovial Anni-
"versaries" ——

ALL.

Jovial Anniversaries! [*groans.*

COUNT.

Poor old boy! he wished to make the best of it!—"jovial "Anniversaries to sing"——

ALL.

Sing!!!

COUNT.

"The following song, of which six copies are enclosed." How very considerate of him! "I, myself, know it by heart." [*distributes the parts.*

ALL.

Poor old Laporte!

COUNT.

"The air is well known to you all, as my favourite."—"P. S. Sing it spiritedly!"

COUNT.

Well, gentlemen, I suppose you are all ready—so one glass to the memory of our poor old friend, and then this most enlivening and "spirited" Chanson!

ALL. (*standing.*)

To the memory of our ghostly entertainer.

COUNT.

Now, gentlemen, the song!

SONG.

HEIGHO, THE FERRY.

AIR—"*Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind.*"

I.

Youth, love, and joy may pass,
Perhaps ere you drain your glass,

Laugh! laugh! while laugh you may;
Spring-buds worms do eat,
King Death hath nimble feet,
No man can run away!
Heigho! sing heigho! Sing, sing, and be merry,
For man's on the wrong shore, and Death's but the Ferry!
Then, heigho, the Ferry,
Sing, sing, and be merry!

II.

Friends mingle but to part,
Heart must be reft of heart,
Laugh! laugh! while laugh you may;
Sea-waves do backward flow,
But to strike the surer blow!
All die, tho' Death delay!
Heigho! sing heigho! Sing, sing, and be merry,
For man's on the wrong shore, and Death's but the Ferry!
Then, heigho, the Ferry,
Sing, sing, and be merry!

III.

Long the Sun has sought the west;
Now night summons all to rest!
Laugh! laugh! while laugh you may;
Brighter climes the sun shall light,
Heavenly morn disperse the night!
Hope gilds the dying day!
Heigho! sing heigho! Sing, sing, and be merry,
For man's on the wrong shore, and Death's but the Ferry!
Then, heigho, the Ferry,
Sing, sing, and be merry!

[*The Scene changes while they are singing the last line.*

SCENE II.

A Drawing Room at MADAME COLOMBIER'S.

(*Enter* CECILE.)

CECILE.

I hope M. Bonaparte will come this evening, for, fond as my poor old eccentric uncle was of him, I long to put into practice the trick the Count and I have agreed to play him. The little upstart; the very idea of his impudence in imagining I would have anything to say to him, overpowers me! I, Cecile de Colombier, the Beauty of Nangis! the adored, the caressed of the first nobles in the province, to be pestered with the attentions of a Lieutenant of Artillery! Scarcely a Frenchman! Pah! I fancy myself following the route of the army, on a baggage waggon or a nine-pounder! Upon my word, M. Bonaparte, you well deserve the trick we are going to play you!

[*Enter* MADAME COLOMBIER, *with a pet pug, and* M. BONAPARTE.

BONAPARTE. (*aside.*)

Here at least I shall be sure of respect.

CECILE. (*aside.*)

Ha! he comes; an offer doubtless, sanctioned by maternal authority.

MADAME.

Cecile, my love, here is M. Bonaparte, who has gallantly deserted the orgies of Bacchus at that odious "Blue Bear," to attend upon ——

BONAPARTE.

To pay my most devoted respects to the most beautiful and charming of women.

CECILE.

A truce to compliments, Sir; I fear you will find my company a poor exchange for the gaiety of your noble companions.

BONAPARTE.

On the contrary, M 'lle, they expelled me from their society by their rudeness.

CECILE.

Indeed! Your presence is a great compliment to me, then, since it is evidently owing to your expulsion from the "Blue Bear."

BONAPARTE.

M 'lle Cecile! I assure you, you wrong me; I had previously determined that this very evening should decide ——

CECILE.

The Count de Passy! was he one of your rude tormentors?

BONAPARTE.

He was, M 'lle, and but that he had been *your* cousin, had paid dearly for his temerity!

CECILE. (*aside.*)

Ha! ha! the little man is valiant! (*aloud.*) Oh! pray do not let our relationship stand in the way of his punishment. (*aside.*) The poor Count, I must put him on his guard.

MADAME.

Oh, no! M. Bonaparte, pray chastise the insolent—indeed, you will do *me* a service, for the other day—you will scarcely believe it—he, purposely as I am persuaded, trod upon the second joint of my poor Bijou's little toe, so violently, that if there come not a bunnion, it will be a miracle. But I must leave you for a few moments. (*aside to* CECILE.) Accept him, he will one day be the first man in France; prime minister, or something of that sort; your dear uncle always said so!

(*aloud.*) Poor Bijou! M. Bonaparte will chastise the Count for treading upon its poor little toe, he will—oh! you darling. [*exit.*

CECILE. (*aside.*)

Now to deceive my little Adonis!

BONAPARTE.

M'lle Colombier ——

CECILE.

M. Bonaparte ——

BONAPARTE.

M'lle —— Cecile, for my heart must speak out. I have come this evening for the express purpose of asking you whether you might not be induced to make me the happiest of men. I know that I am neither rich nor powerful, but I do not consider either riches or power essential to happiness. With you, Cecile, in some quiet hamlet, my ambition would be satisfied to my heart's content. Dreams I have had indeed of earning some high place in men's esteem, of conquest, and of glory; but you—my Sun, have dispersed them like mists of the morning. Love is more powerful than Glory; say then, may I hope for your hand?

CECILE.

And heart?

BONAPARTE.

Cecile, I feel convinced, would not give one without the other.

CECILE.

But surely, M. Bonaparte, you do not wish to relinquish a profession which may lead you to the highest offices of the state—to glory and honour—for the sake of indulging the caprices of a boyish attachment ——

BONAPARTE.

Boyish?!

CECILE.

Nay; I meant not to offend your dignity; but surely you had better hesitate?

BONAPARTE.

No! I have made up my mind! and I am no boy to be swayed like a vane by the wind. These times so peaceful, this nation so servile, hold out no prospect to me of realizing the dreams of ambition. With you, Cecile, and obscurity, my happiness will be complete; may I then hope?

CECILE.

Really, M. Bonaparte, this avowal has come upon me so suddenly,—do not be surprised at my confusion,—but,—— but—— you know—— the—— the—— shrubbery—— the summer-house——

BONAPARTE. (*aside.*)

What the devil can she mean? (*aloud.*) Yes, certainly!

CECILE.

Be there—as the clock strikes one, and my answer——

[*exit in feigned confusion.*

BONAPARTE.

Well! women are strange creatures, certainly! What she is too bashful to confess in a drawing-room at twelve, she promises to disclose in a summer-house at one. Well, it is not for me to grumble, for the place and the hour are a sure earnest of a favourable reply. My own sweet Cecile! how happy shall we be in a cottage, with our books, our flowers, our music, and our children: at length, then, that ambition, which, has, alas! no scope for its exertions, will be put to rest, and a wife and moderate competency will render me the happiest of men! [*exit.*

SCENE III.

Moonlight.—A Shrubbery.—A Summer House.

Enter the COUNT *and his companions tipsy and singing*

Heigho, sing heigho, sing, sing, and be merry;
For man's on the wrong shore and death's but the ferry:
Then heigho, the ferry!
Sing, sing, and be merry.

COUNT. (*more tipsy than the rest.*)

By St. Denis! it is as good a song as ever was sung —— and a merry —— and old Laporte, bless his old whiskers, was a true poet. Poeta nascitur,—but *he* 's dead —— Heigho! sing heigho!

D'ESPREMENIL.

If you make such a row, you 'll spoil all the sport.

COUNT.

I 'm not making a row, I 'm singing a song. Which is the summer-house? Sing Heigho the Ferry!

D'ESPREMENIL.

My dear Count, it is already after twelve; your rival will be here directly.

COUNT.

Well, let him come! I 'll salt him, and pepper him, and swallow him whole, the little impertinent popgun. Oh! here 's a watering pot—delightful idea—this shall be my artillery; where 's the ladder?

D'ESPREMENIL.

What in the world are you up to?

COUNT.

Up to? The ladder, to be sure. [*takes a ladder.*

DE CARRIER.

You 'll never be able to get up.

COUNT.

Then I shall never be able to come down.——Hold hard! Now then, (*mounting,*) give us the watering pot. I say, boys, it 's devilish cloudy ——

MENEVAL.

Can 't say I see a single cloud ——

COUNT.

That 's because you see double. The fact is, it 's d—d cloudy (*pouring water on* MENEVAL); don 't you feel the rain? Ha! ha! Sing, heigho, the ferry! (*sits on top of summer-house.*) Who says I don 't know how to rise? and now I 'm risen, I 'll show you how to *reign*. (*pours more water.*) Heads, my boys, ha! ha! ha!

BRETEUIL.

If you keep on raining at that extravagant rate, Count, you 'll have no favours left for the little artilleryman!

COUNT.

Pooh! there 's more than enough left to drown him; it 's the largest pot in the garden. I say, d'Espremenil, can you imitate a woman's voice?

D'ESPREMENIL.

To a T!

COUNT.

To a G! you mean, you blockhead! Well, go into the summer-house, and let us hear you say, "M. Bonaparte, M. Bonaparte, your Cecile awaits you!"

D'ESPREMENIL.

M. Bonaparte, M. Bonaparte, your Cecile awaits you!

COUNT.

Bravo, bravo! Why, I should be taken in myself. Now,

get inside, all of you; and, when he comes, d'Espremenil, you call him suddenly to the door, and I 'll give his amorous propensities a cooling. [*all go inside.*

D'ESPREMENIL. *(poking his head out.)*

Hush! I thought I heard steps!

COUNT. *(pouring water on him.)*

Get in with you—ha! ha! d'Espremenil—is it cool? By St. Denis, I 'll have a drink before it 's all gone!

[*drinks out of the rose.*

D'ESPREMENIL.

What! drinking water? Oh, fie!

COUNT.

Well, it is wrong, I confess, but it 's under the rose, you know! (*holding up the rose of the pot.*) Do you hear anything?

D'ESPREMENIL.

Yes!

COUNT.

What?

D'ESPREMENIL.

The loud complaints of your interior at the arrival of so unusual a beverage!

COUNT.

Phsa, you rascal, in with you. I hear him coming, I know his step; hush! [*lies down on the roof.*

Enter BONAPARTE.

BONAPARTE.

I am punctual. I don 't think it has struck one yet. What a lovely night it is—not a cloud to be seen!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

Odd that, and it 's going to rain! [*the clock strikes one.*

BONAPARTE.

Can she be concealed in the summer-house? Cecile! Cecile!

D'ESPREMENIL. (*from inside.*)

M. Bonaparte, M. Bonaparte, your Cecile awaits you!

BONAPARTE.

You little rogue—what! playing bopeep, are you?

[*rushes to the door, and receives the contents of the watering-pot, while the gentlemen rush out, and all roar with laughter.*

COUNT.

Ha! ha! M. Bonaparte, my Cupid, why don't you join us? Poor little fellow, I am afraid you are damp! you came here to catch a sweetheart—you will only catch cold! Ha! ha! ha!

BONAPARTE.

M. le Comte, descend; I have something for your private ear!

COUNT.

With all my heart.

D'ESPREMENIL.

I'll get the ladder for you.

COUNT.

Phsa, man! we rise slowly, but come down (*jumps*) voilà—like that.—Now, my little hero, what have you to say to me?

BONAPARTE. (*strikes him.*)

That! Do you understand the language?

COUNT.

A blow, a blow, to the Count de Passy! Draw, M. Bonaparte, this must be settled upon the spot.

BONAPARTE.

You are not sober. I will not fight till daybreak.

COUNT.

By St. Denis, you shall fight, and that instantly; a blow can never be so well wiped out as on the spot where it is received. The very moon blushes at the disgrace of the first swordsman in France. Come on, Sir.

BONAPARTE.

Rash fool! Gentlemen, you bear witness I would postpone this affair; but the Count de Passy insists on immediate satisfaction, and even tho' he be not sober——

COUNT.

Not sober—after a blow! Look at me again, Sir; you are mistaken!

BONAPARTE.

Nay, then I have no further scruple.

COUNT.

Come! I am impatient.

BONAPARTE.

I am ready. *(they fight, and* BONAPARTE *disarms the* COUNT, *who slips and falls down.)* Now, M. le Comte, first swordsman of France, might I extract blood for water; but you have had, I trust, a sufficient lesson. *(helps him to rise, and restores him his sword.)* Recollect, M. le Comte, that it is not necessary to be a Noble in order to be a Gentleman; and, when next you play your jests, select some of your own order who may be better disposed to put up with them! What, gentlemen! done laughing? Don 't you see the joke, now? Not a smile? Wonderful! is it not! that a soldier should know how to fence; and a gentleman, without a Title, how to defend his honour? [*going.*

COUNT.

Stay, M. Bonaparte, you are a fine fellow, and I beg your pardon. You have vanquished the best swordsman in France,

you have even spared his life. If I can serve you in any way, command me; I have interest with the King! ——

BONAPARTE.

Keep it, M. le Comte; you may require it for yourself, ere long! One favour I will, indeed, ask of you ——

COUNT.

It is granted ere you name it!

BONAPARTE.

Tell M'lle Colombier that I consider this paltry trick unworthy of her; and that I feel not the slightest regret in resigning, for ever, the woman who could be guilty of it! And now, gentlemen, adieu! It will be long, very long, before you see me again at the Blue Bear of Nangis.

[*exit.*

End of Act 3.

A lapse of Seventeen Years!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Inside a low house in the Rue de la Chiffe, ADRIEN *and Thieves carousing.* DELABORDE *smoking, apart from the rest.*

ADRIEN.

Well! well! I don't mind if I do oblige you, gentlemen, but please to be particular in joining in the chorus correctly.

ALL.

Aye! aye! We will! we will!

SONG AND CHORUS.

ADRIEN AND THIEVES.

I.

When the nights are dark and the Gendarmes sleep,
To the rich man's château do we softly creep;
Vive le vol!
We open the shutters with cracksmen's skill,
And stealthily climb o'er the window sill;
Chorus.—Then, Hurrah for the plunder, boys! Vive le vol!
Hurrah for the plunder, boys! Vive le vol!

II.

When the Emperor storms a beleagured town,
With their rhino he makes all the rich come down;
Vive le vol!
Then what is the difference 'twixt him and me,
Except a more fortunate thief he be?

Chorus.—We 're all for the plunder, boys! Vive le vol!
We 're all for the plunder, boys! Vive le vol!

THIEVES. (*drinking.*).

Bravo! bravo! To the Emperor!—to the Emperor!

ADRIEN. (*giving toast.*)

To the Grand-Captain of us all!

ALL.

Well said! well said!

DELABORDE.

And so say I, with all my heart.

ADRIEN.

Yes! for where we rob a stray traveller, he despoils a province; where we gut a house, he demolishes a town; and where we pick one pocket, he picks a thousand. Again,—to the Emperor! the Captain-general of us all, say I. (*to* DELABORDE.) Won 't you join in our toast, friend?

DELABORDE.

With all my soul, and may he soon depart for *another* kingdom!

ADRIEN.

Bravo! for the more kingdoms he conquers, the more room we shall have for *our* honest exertions.

DELABORDE. (*aside.*)

It is almost time Martin were come! tho' it will be impossible to converse with him 'till these vagabonds are gone!

Enter the COUNT, *in rags, as the sweeper of a crossing.*

COUNT, (*looking in right hand pocket.*)

Not a sou have I earned to-day, tho' I've kept my crossing as clean as a billiard table; I think I must look out for some other investment for my capital, for my poor broom is like myself, considerably the worse for wear. What respectable

society have I fallen into—of the new régime, certainly, but all in awfully easy circumstances; what a savour proceeds from that unctuous broth—I wonder how it would taste. Have these thieves any charity? Hum! I have seen countenances more prepossessing. Then there's that fellow at the side table—— (*goes up and stares at him.*) No — No— he is worse than the others—a study for a murderer, upon my soul. I never saw such a d—d ugly mug in my life. Oh! hang it! thieves before murderers; so have at ye, my boys.—(*goes up, bows, and helps himself, while the thieves stare in astonishment; after eating greedily, he sits on the table in the middle of them.*) (*to* ADRIEN.) Kind Sir, I think you asked me how I was? I 'm better—considerably better, thanks to your welcome invitation and most noble hospitality. I have 'nt dined so well these six months—upon my word and honour I have 'nt; nor so cheaply, tho' you seem incredulous!

FAT THIEF.

You are impudent, fellow citizen!

COUNT.

Not at all unlikely, my fat friend; I have 'nt tasted food since,—since,—let me recollect—no, not since the day but one before yesterday, when I regaled myself with a sou's worth of biscuit.

ADRIEN.

And how on earth have you lived since?

COUNT.

On earth! I have lived on air—upon the crumbs.

ALL.

Poor fellow! poor fellow!

COUNT.

I thought you were charitable; Honesty is written on your faces. (*aside.*) Heaven forgive me!

ADRIEN.

I see you are a good physiognomist: at all events, *we* never starve.

COUNT.

No! You sometimes— *(draws his finger over his throat.)*

ADRIEN.

Sometimes! But what profession is there without danger? Indeed, I think there have been fewer of our trade, (*making the same sign*) as you call it, within the last ten years than of any other.

COUNT.

Too true! Alas! poor France!! Honesty has indeed had a rough time of it! I only know one good thing of the Revolution!

ADRIEN.

What is that?

COUNT.

I once had creditors! Where are they now? Poor devils! I should have paid them with gold; the Revolution paid them with steel! They have all been guillotined—they were so rich, my creditors! I watched their heads one by one pop off, with almost as much grief as satisfaction!

ADRIEN.

They may have left heirs! You may have creditors still?

COUNT, (*rising.*)

By St. Denis! you make me proud again. I— I with creditors! What rich pickings! Egad, I feel myself once more of importance to society; I shall not die without some sympathising friends!

ADRIEN.

Come, now! we have given you a very handsome supper; pay the bill ——

COUNT.

Pay the bill! which will you have, my hat, or my coat, or my broom, or my moustache ——

ADRIEN.

Psha! I do'nt mean anything of that kind; tell us your story!

COUNT.

You won't care to hear it!

ADRIEN.

Why not?

COUNT.

It's an o'er common tale now-a-days; I am an aristocrat!!! And have a beautiful château—in Spain!

[*rising and assuming great dignity.*

ADRIEN.

A château in Spain? Ha! ha! ha! Like Montgolfier's, his castles are in the air!

DELABORDE. (*aside.*)

Ha! I must attend to this!

ALL THE THIEVES.

Ha! ha! ha! an aristocrat! Look at him!! look at him!!

COUNT.

Yes, my noble friends, an aristocrat, whom the waves of the Revolution have left high and dry upon the beach of misfortune, dry—devilish dry. [*seizes a glass and drinks.*

ADRIEN. (*walking round him.*)

An aristocrat, eh? why, I have'nt seen one these eight years ——

COUNT.

Have'nt you? then mark me well, observe my costly habiliments, my well-fed sides, my ruddy cheeks, my well-powdered peruke, my well-lined pockets, my cane (*using broom.*) and my aristocratic air.

ADRIEN.

Ha! ha! ha! his aristocratic air—my dear fellow, you are too rich. I have 'nt laughed so much for many a-day; but come, tell us your story, for it must be vastly amusing, if it 's anything like yourself!

COUNT.

Well, then, here goes! In the first place, let me tell you that my name is the Count de Passy.

DELABORDE. (*aside.*)

Heavens! can it be possible?

ALL.

Bravo! bravo! long live the Count de Passy.

ADRIEN.

Before you go on with your story, allow me to make one observation,—you would make a most excellent actor ——

COUNT.

Sir, you are a gentleman of discrimination; I *am* a very good actor!

ADRIEN.

You act the vagabond Count, amazingly well!

COUNT.

I ought; I have played the part these ten years! (*aside.*) They don 't believe I am a Count!

ADRIEN.

To crowded houses?

COUNT.

To the World!

ADRIEN.

Why not try for an engagement in Paris? it would be a good speculation ——

COUNT.

I 've had enough of the "Game of Speculation." Every-

body in the world has seen me at it. I'm tired of it! Once a rich noble, and now the sweeper of a crossing ——

ADRIEN.

What? you really are a Count?

COUNT.

Aye! "every inch a Count!!" But listen to my tale; it is soon told! Once upon a time, gentlemen, ——

ALL.

Ha! ha! capital! the old beginning!

COUNT.

Once upon a time I had 100,000 francs a year, and passed my days as pleasantly ——

ADRIEN.

As your nights—I dare say!

COUNT.

As pleasantly as good health, high rank, and a full purse would allow. Well, in the year 1789, I married a wife, a charming creature, gentlemen ——

ADRIEN.

Oh, of course!

COUNT.

In fact, she was the Emperor Napoleon's first love!

ADRIEN.

What a magnifico!—Not only a Count, but the successful rival of an Emperor—ha!

COUNT.

Our happiness, however, was short-lived ——

ADRIEN.

Exactly! Incompatibility of temper?

COUNT.

No! You are wrong. There was never a happier couple

in the world. But, on the fatal 4th of October, 1794, my kind neighbours stormed my château, burned my furniture, and killed my servants!

ADRIEN.

How the devil did they come to miss *you?*

COUNT.

I'll tell you; you talked just now of acting; I was one of the best amateurs in France, and, as soon as the alarm was given, disguised myself as an old woman, and, escaping by a back-way, became, by a circuitous path, one of the first aggressors of my own home.

ALL.

Capital! capital!

COUNT.

I need'nt point out to you the zeal with which I burned and demolished, till my roof-tree was levelled with the dust. I did a stroke in your line, too—I stole my own Title deeds!

ALL.

Ha! ha! bravo!

ADRIEN.

But your wife?

COUNT.

Was absent from home; so that I had only myself to look after. Well, I escaped to the sea-coast, and to England. In England I was, firstly, a school-master; but I didn't relish that, for the young rascals of boys used to fasten me to my chair with cobler's wax; make what they called apple-pies in my bed; squirt dirty water at me through the key-hole; and bolster me out of my senses, whenever I omitted to lock my bedroom door!

ALL.

Ha! ha! ha! the young scamps!

COUNT.

Secondly, I became a dancing-master!

ADRIEN.

That was better than a school-master!

COUNT.

A little; not much! for the young gentlemen ridiculed me, and the young ladies pitied me; I could put up neither with contempt nor commiseration, so I descended to the last round of the ladder, and became a vender—shall I confess it?—a vender of matches! When even that failed, I went to America, that dear refuge of all persecuted humanity, when I lived easily enough for several years! At last, hearing that Napoleon was well disposed to the emigrants, I returned, but, alas! only to weep over the fate of the gallant d'Enghien, and to see myself farther than ever from the restoration of my estates; and the plots which the Royalists are continually hatching against the Emperor continue to keep your humble servant a Knight of the most noble Order of the Broom!

ADRIEN.

Why not enter the army?

COUNT.

If I enter the Emperor's army, I fight against my King! If I enter the King's army I combat against my country! What my Honour forbids my necessity cannot compel!

ADRIEN.

Bravo! you are a fine fellow, and heartily welcome to your supper; is 'nt he, boys?

ALL.

Aye! aye!

COUNT.

I am sure, gentlemen, *your* approbation is a comfort to me, and I wish you, like myself, a better occupation!

ALL.

Poor fellow! poor fellow!

ADRIEN.

But your wife; the Emperor's first love; did she never join you? you seem to avoid speaking of her ——

COUNT.

And well I may! Poor Cecile! I have never heard of thee from that day to this! [*weeps.*

ADRIEN.

I suppose you paid for your place, poor as it is, M. le Comte?

COUNT.

Paid for it? I believe you! To gét a good crossing, like a good place under government or a seat in the senate, requires the applicant to be prepared—with a consideration. I paid five francs for mine, including the fixtures!

ALL.

Fixtures! What a droll fellow!

COUNT. (*pulling out list.*)

I believe I have a list of them in my pocket, as handed over to me with scrupulous fidelity by my predecessor.

ALL.

Read! read!

COUNT. (*reading.*)

ITEM I.

"Two iron posts to lean against." A great luxury, gentlemen, many crossings have not even one.

ITEM II.

"The crossing is situated on the high road to a large chapel." The ladies, God bless them! are always a poor sweeper's best customers; they only like to confess their sins in clean petticoats and stainless pantalettes! [*all laugh.*

ITEM III.

"There is a cookshop opposite." To feast your eyes, make your mouth water, and render your supplications outrageously doleful, as you devour the delicate pork pies with one eye, and pierce your charitable victim's heart with the other.

ITEM IV.

"An awfully unhealthy neighbourhood." This last item, of course, affords one a prospect of a speedy relief from one's misery! an advantage not to be sneezed at!

ADRIEN.

And who succeeds to this valuable property in case you die without making a will?

COUNT.

It buries me. It is sold by the police to the highest bidder! and I lie till doomsday in the proceeds. So, you see, I am a truly honest man, for I have already paid for my coffin!

ALL.

Ha! ha! ha! he is capitally provided for!

ADRIEN.

Well, good bye, Count; I 'm sorry for your misfortunes, but if you should ever be an aristocrat again, come to us, and we 'll relieve you of your superfluous burthens. Come along, boys! say bon soir to this *magnificent* Count, who has already paid for his coffin, and let us to business immediately.

All the Thieves, except ROGUET, *bow to the* COUNT, *and depart, singing "Vive le Vol!"*

ROGUET. (*bowing.*)

Your pardon, M. le Comte; a word, if you please.

COUNT.

With pleasure! What the deuce do you want?

ROGUET.

You spoke of title deeds?

COUNT.

I did, Sir; but I beg pardon, to whom have I the felicity of speaking?

ROGUET.

My name, M. le Comte, is Roguet ——

COUNT.

Roguet? but what's in a name?

ROGUET.

Phsa! The title deeds! where are they? Have you got them still by you? You see, I am a bit of a money-lender.

COUNT.

As well as ——

ROGUET.

Hush!

COUNT.

Oh! I perfectly understand. Behold a combination of talents! a Janus of Theft! sometimes robbing boldly with his "stand and deliver!" at others, stealing unctuously, with his "interest and parchments:" part bully! part sneak! My rags are of no use to the bully; but my title-deeds may be of vast importance to the sneak!

ROGUET.

You flatter me, M. le Comte! Would I were the talented individual you have so ingeniously pourtrayed. My master is indeed an adept—a genius! But do tell me—have you still the title deeds?

COUNT.

No, M. Roguet. I lost my title-deeds when crossing the Atlantic; they have escaped the jaws of the land sharks by falling into those of the sea.

ROGUET.

Ah! then I waste time —— [*going.*

COUNT.

And time is money to thieves and usurers; but stay, M. Roguet, I have still some property; what do you say to a small advance on the reversion of the crossing?

ROGUET.

Phsa, fool! [*going again.*

COUNT.

One moment more, M. Roguet, I have something yet more valuable than even that valuable property.

ROGUET.

What, the title-deeds? ah! you sly dog, you.

COUNT.

You will be as secret and as silent as the grave; promise.

ROGUET.

I promise! I promise!

COUNT.

Then I will confide in you. Now, do, M. Roguet, be good-natured for once, and just do me a little trifling post obit on the broomstick.

ROGUET.

D—n the broomstick, you ragged good-for-nothing. [*exit.*

COUNT. (*laughing.*)

Ha! ha! ha! mine is certainly a strange career; I shall never have done with adventures. Have they left anything drinkable? [*looks round.*

DELABORDE. (*rising and coming forward.*)

No, I am afraid to trust him, he is too honourable for what I meditate; I wish he would be off. He little knows how soon he will be avenged. Surely Martin must be waiting outside. [*exit.*

COUNT.

The thirsty rascals have left nothing. I'm getting devilish sleepy. By St. Denis, a most inviting closet. Hallo! why my murderous-looking friend 's gone too; so much the better. I shall venture to close my eyes. I never saw such a d—d ugly mug in all my life. One of the Committee of Public Safety, I 'll lay a wager; Fouquier Tinville himself, perhaps, who knows?

[*gradually settles down in a closet between the audience and where* DELABORDE *was sitting, with the door ajar towards audience.*

(*Enter* DELABORDE *and* MARTIN.)

DELABORDE. (*looking round.*)

Ha! the Count has departed!. That is all right; now, then, Martin, we can talk without fear of interruption.

MARTIN.

Yes! I waited till they were all gone!

DELABORDE.

Well, and what have you ascertained?

MARTIN. (*loudly.*)

That the Emperor will pass, almost privately, through Nangis to-morrow.

COUNT. (*aside.*)

Emperor—Nangis—to-morrow!

MARTIN.

And will sup at the Blue Bear, as you expected, alone?

DELABORDE.

Alone! at the Blue Bear!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

Alone! at the Blue Bear!

DELABORDE.

How did you find it out?

MARTIN.

Why, my Master, old Jean Jomini, tells me that to-morrow, being the 4th October, there will take place the annual dinner provided by the will of M. Laporte, for six of his friends, all of whom, except the Emperor, are long since dead!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

All but one! There will be an extra guest to-morrow.

DELABORDE.

The Emperor will then sup alone, as I expected he would, on so solemn an occasion. Now, attend to my instructions.

MARTIN.

I am attending!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

And so am I!

DELABORDE.

This is a plan of the Blue Bear; there is a window reaching to the ground!

MARTIN.

There is.

COUNT. (*aside.*)

I remember it well.

DELABORDE.

Well, then, precisely at half-past eleven, you will quietly open that window ——

MARTIN and COUNT. (*aside.*)

I will!

DELABORDE.

And whistle quietly; thus— (*whistles.*)

MARTIN and COUNT. (*aside.*)

Exactly!

DELABORDE.

And then, one blow restores the Bourbon to the throne.

MARTIN.

Are you sure the Emperor will be without guards?

DELABORDE.

Certain! They are to be left half-a-mile off, as there is no stabling at the Blue Bear.

MARTIN.

But he will have an aide-de-camp with him?

DELABORDE.

Not in the same room! Only the friends mentioned in the will can be present; there will be no help near him!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

You are mistaken!

MARTIN.

Very well; then we have arranged everything! Adieu, M. Delaborde, I shall not forget your instructions ——

DELABORDE.

Adieu, Martin, at half-past eleven I shall be ready.—(*exit* MARTIN.)—The hour I have panted for has at length, then, nearly arrived. If I succeed, no honours will be too great for the restorer of the Bourbon; and, if I fail, I know how to die—a martyr to my king and country! Shade of Charlotte Corday, look down upon me, for I go to rid the world of a tyrant!

COUNT. (*coming out.*)

By St. Denis, that's a nice sort of fellow to be alone with in a place like this; he talks of assassinating the Emperor as coolly as I should of eating my dinner! Let me see; if I let him go on, I shall be the rich Count de Passy in a fortnight. I fancy myself already at my château, indulging myself with the awful luxury of kicking its present petti-

fogging proprietors out of possession. Having thus gained a glorious appetite, (as if now I was ever in want of one,) I shall order dinner to be laid for a dozen in every room in the house. I shall then send for my notary from Nangis.—Nangis! what a scoundrel I am! didn't this tyrannical little Emperor spare my life one fine morning, at that very town of Nangis? By St. Denis, I am ashamed of myself, and deserve to sweep a crossing for the remainder of my days! A fig for the estate, as long as I cry quits with my little lieutenant! Egad, there's one thing entirely escaped me, I am sure of a dinner to-morrow; I dine with an Emperor! he'll never recognise me! Not recognise me?—I should like to know who could ever mistake me for anything but the most puissant and noble Count de Passy, Knight of the Order of the Broom—Companion of the Pavé, etc., etc., etc. [*struts out.*

SCENE II.

Blue Bear at Nangis.

Inscriptions painted in Large Letters on Four of the Seven Chairs.

On M. Breteuil's,	M. de Carrier,
Guillotined.	*Hanged at the Lamp-post.*
Marquis de Meneval,	Count d'Espremenil,
Drowned at Lyons.	*Transported to Cayenne.*

JEAN JOMINI. (*discovered.*)

Well! wonders never will cease in this extraordinary country; topsy-turvy! topsy-turvy! Here is the little Lieutenant of Artillery, that poor Count de Passy used to laugh at so much, turned into an Emperor, and coming to dine with six ghosts, at the Blue Bear of Nangis! (*calling.*) Martin!

Martin! how different Martin is from François; poor François, I wonder what has become of him. The conscription got hold of him, and he has been shot this longtime, I dare say; poor François! he was so attentive ——

[*enter* FRANÇOIS, *as a General.*

So considerate—never broke anything ——

FRANÇOIS. (*from behind a curtain.*)

Except this day seventeen years ago, your best punch bowl ——

JEAN JOMINI.

Oh Lord! what's that? Martin! Martin!

Enter MARTIN.

Didn't you hear a noise, Martin,—an unearthly noise?

MARTIN.

Noise? Nothing but your own voice.

JEAN JOMINI.

I certainly did hear a voice!

MARTIN.

Perhaps it was one of the ghosts! ha! ha! (*aside.*) Superstitious old fool! [*exit* MARTIN.

JEAN JOMINI.

The ghost of poor François, doubtless; ghosts don't like to be talked about. They think that as they have done with us, we should have done with them. Oh Lord! this would be a fearful house to live in, if I wasn't in a manner used to it! How often have I not awoke in the night, and heard poor old M. Laporte's ghost, after having stolen the key from the chair by my bedside, go stealthily to the cellar; and then, after mustering courage enough to creep out of bed, watched him come up into this room with a bottle of the Burgundy with the red seal, which he would gloat over with his green eyes, and open with an infernal skeleton corkscrew; and I, not daring

to interfere, have stolen back quietly to bed. When I awoke, I used to fancy I had dreamed it all, but it was no dream, for when I came down stairs, there would stand the bottle on that table, as empty as when it was made, with a glass alongside, just full enough to show it had been used ——

FRANÇOIS. (*coming down.*)

You don 't say so, Jean Jomini ——

JEAN JOMINI.

Your pardon, Sir, but I 'm an old man, and a little nervous, and ——

FRANÇOIS.

I startled you—a drop of the Burgundy with the red seal will soon put you to rights again. It is the best wine I ever tasted!

JEAN JOMINI.

May I ask whom I have the honour of addressing? My eyes are none of the best now, and then, I am more nervous to day than usual, for I expect the Emperor of France to dinner.

FRANÇOIS.

He has sent me forward to say he will be here directly.

JEAN JOMINI.

Everything is prepared! May I hope His most gracious Majesty is quite well?

FRANÇOIS.

Never better! So M. Laporte steals your Burgundy, does he?

JEAN JOMINI.

His ghost does, Sir! and a terrible thief *it* is!

FRANÇOIS.

That 's very extraordinary!

JEAN JOMINI.

Quite true, tho', Sir! But Lord love you, Sir, he, I mean

it, is quite welcome to it—it 's all it 's own, the money he left for the annual dinner has kept myself and the Blue Bear these seventeen years; for, what with committees of public safety, guillotines, conscriptions, Robespierres, Marats, consuls, murders, robberies, and Emperors, there 's been but little doing in my line at Nangis, Sir, this long time past.

FRANÇOIS.

You certainly put the Emperor into good company! But are you sure it was the ghost that used to drink your Burgundy? Had you not one François in the house some time ago, a good-looking, handy, good-tempered sort of a fellow?

JEAN JOMINI.

I certainly had a waiter of that name, but he wasn 't good-looking; on the contrary, remarkably plain; however, he was honest—he never took the wine, I 'll swear.

FRANÇOIS. (*coming close to him.*)

Yes, he did! Jean Jomini; and I used to laugh in my white sheet at you, as you stood shivering at that door, half crazy with the cold and fright, ha! ha! ha! The red seal eh? any left?

JEAN JOMINI.

Can I believe my ears, my eyes? Why, François, you dear good-for-nothing rascal—I thought you had been shot long ago—but what mean these fine clothes? These medals? Are you a real General?

FRANÇOIS.

Yes, and Aide-de-camp to the Emperor!

JEAN JOMINI.

And Aide-de-camp to the Emperor? my old waiter François. Wonders certainly never will cease in this extraordinary country; topsy-turvy! topsy-turvy! And how did all this come about, François? M. General, I mean?——

FRANÇOIS.

Nay, you at least may still call me François! T'will be a set off against the Burgundy!

JEAN JOMINI.

Ha! you sly dog! I'll never believe in ghosts again, tho' they do dine here, and pay for all they have; but how did it all come about, François?

FRANÇOIS.

Why, simply enough. At the terrible passage of Lodi I twice saved the Emperor's life, was made a colonel on the spot, and a general after, the glorious battle of Marengo, where, with little Kellerman, whom the Emperor, by-the-bye, is a little jealous of on that account, I and my regiment of cavalry happened to be at the right place at the right time (the only secret in War, Jean Jomini,) and saved the fortune of the day.

JEAN JOMINI.

I wish you joy, with all my heart. Bless my soul, what an extraordinary country this is—only to think of the little lieutenant that poor Count—(*enter* NAPOLEON *behind,*)—de Passy, heaven rest his soul, used to play such jokes upon—that he should be The Emperor of France—that he should have had so much genius in him—the little insignificant ——

[NAPOLEON *takes him by the ear and turns him round.*

NAPOLEON.

Ha! ha! treason! treason! The Emperor insignificant?!

JEAN JOMINI.

Oh Lord! oh Lord! it's the little lieu —— Emperor himself. Pardon, Sire, but I was speaking of a young officer who was quartered here seventeen years ago. Your gracious Majesty no more resembles him —— than ——

NAPOLEON.

Fie! fie! Jean Jomini! I fear you are quite as much a courtier as the rest of them, who, now I am the Emperor of France, try to persuade me that I am descended from one of the noblest old families in Italy; whereas, were I to fall to-morrow, they would call me nothing but a little Corsican adventurer. A fig for your pedigrees! The Bourbons are the family with ancestors! the Napoleons the family with brains! And am I the only surviving guest of poor dear eccentric old M. Laporte, Jean Jomini?

JEAN JOMINI.

The only one left, your Majesty!

NAPOLEON.

What! not one remaining to pass his jests upon the poor little lieutenant of artillery? It is a strange world!

JEAN JOMINI.

And a most extraordinary country, please your Majesty! Topsy-turvy! topsy-turvy! Here is M. Breteuil's chair! You see! he was guillotined! [*shows chair.*

NAPOLEON.

And M. de Carrier?

JEAN JOMINI. (*shows chair.*)

Hanged at the lamp-post!

NAPOLEON.

The Marquis de Meneval?

JEAN JOMINI. (*shows chair.*)

Drowned by order of the Committee of Public Safety at Lyons!

NAPOLEON.

Hum! private and public safety did not agree! The Count d'Espremenil?

JEAN JOMINI. (*shows chair.*)

Transported to Cayenne!

NAPOLEON.

A hot place indeed! And tho' last, not least, the Count de Passy,—my rival?

JEAN JOMINI. (*shows chair.*)

Please your Majesty, I never could make out what became of *him*;—(*enter* COUNT *behind,*)—however, I think we may as well have him guillotined too ——

COUNT. (*seizing* JOMINI.)

Thank you! M. Jean Jomini! but if it is all the same, the Count de Passy will still keep his head on his shoulders.

ALL.

The Count de Passy?

COUNT.

The same, and quite at your service! What! don't you know me? Don't you recollect Cecile—poor Cecile! and the summer-house? Ah! I see you remember, and here kneels the Count to ask pardon for having thrown cold water on the Emperor! [*kneels.*

NAPOLEON.

Ha! ha! you are then really the Count de Passy! Rise, M. le Comte, the Emperor does not remember the wrongs of the Lieutenant! But you are wofully altered! Your estates?

COUNT.

Are upon my back! No, not all, for I am lord of this broomstick beside. But, poor as I am, I shall this day have the honour of dining with an Emperor,—(*bowing,*)—if your Majesty has no objection?

NAPOLEON.

On the contrary, I invite you!

COUNT. (*patting* JOMINI.)

And how goes it with the "Blue Bear?"

JOMINI.

Topsy turvy! Topsy turvy!

COUNT. (*going up.*)

Ah! this is my chair; and this —— What! Meneval guillotined? Poor devil! [*examines chairs.*

NAPOLEON.

Is dinner ready, Jean Jomini?

JEAN JOMINI.

They are bringing it in now, your Majesty.

[*dinner brought in,* JOMINI *superintends, and exit.*

NAPOLEON.

Well, François, and have you squared accounts with the old ghost-seer?

FRANÇOIS.

Oh! yes, your Majesty. The red seal has turned him into a sceptic; at all events, he won't believe in Burgundy-drinking ghosts any longer.

NAPOLEON.

Ha! ha! Capital! You may withdraw now, François; the Count and I must have a tête-à-tête.

FRANÇOIS.

Have a care, he is a Legitimist and a beggar—he may ——

NAPOLEON.

Look at his face! Does that smile hide a false heart? Phsa! François! retire; you are no Lavater!

FRANÇOIS. (*aside.*)

I don't half like it. He's so infernally out at elbows. But the guard will be here at twelve. [*exit* FRANÇOIS.

NAPOLEON.

The true secret of Genius is to know your *men!* Most

Kings have spoiled their work by using bad tools! I was never deceived in a countenance yet, and therefore have never been betrayed.

COUNT. (*coming down.*)

May I beg your Majesty to be seated. The dinner is ready.

NAPOLEON.

You wait, M. le Comte. I beg a thousand pardons—and, doubtless, you are hungry. [*they seat themselves.*

COUNT.

Hungry! I have 'nt seen such a dinner as this, this many a day.

NAPOLEON.

You must have indeed known poverty and misfortune since last we met. The little Lieutenant was right after all!

COUNT.

Your Majesty was indeed a true prophet!

NAPOLEON.

But why did you not apply to me?

COUNT.

I am a Legitimist!

NAPOLEON.

I should have thought poverty would have cured you of Legitimacy! Many have overcome their scruples.

COUNT.

But not the Count de Passy! Much as I honour your Majesty for your grand talents and great love for the glory of France, I am still a Legitimist! (*earnestly.*) Does your Majesty often venture alone so far from your guards?

NAPOLEON.

Often! Fear is a stranger to me! Mine is a charmed life—"The bullet which shall kill me is not yet cast!"

COUNT.

I am poor!

NAPOLEON.

I see it.

COUNT.

Bold!

NAPOLEON.

I know it!

COUNT.

We are alone!

NAPOLEON.

Even so!

COUNT. (*aside.*)

Cool enough! I'll be more plain! (*aloud.*) If your Majesty's chair had something like this painted upon it, I should again be rich, noble, and prosperous!

NAPOLEON.

Phsa, Count! keep such idle talk for schoolboys! I knew that you, a noble of France, were incapable of what you insinuate, or I should have had you secured when you first disclosed yourself! François would have made short work with you! A glass of wine?

COUNT. (*stammering with surprise.*)

With pleasure!

NAPOLEON. (*standing.*)

To the memory of our ghostly entertainer! and the rest of — — our— absent friends! [*the* COUNT *drinks the toast.*

NAPOLEON.

Are you a politician, Count?

COUNT.

Yes, but out of office! A statesman in rags! a man you seldom see!—*I* will tell you Truth!

NAPOLEON. (*aside.*)

Would I had such a statesman! (*aloud.*) Well, honest statesman, when shall France have *Peace?*

COUNT.

When the Bourbons shall be restored, and you only their Prime Minister! When the Press shall be Free, and Cayenne no longer a place of Torture for patriot Frenchmen!

NAPOLEON.

A pretty statesman, truly! Listen to my answer! The Bourbons can never be but short sojourners in France! Once an Emperor, never a subject! The Press will ever be a nuisance, and Cayenne always a necessity! I am the child of Victory and France; Frenchmen will ever be faithful, even to the *memory* of their Emperor! Again, then, I ask, when shall France have peace?

COUNT.

When there shall come a Napoleon of Peace—and that, I fear, will be deferred till Doomsday!

NAPOLEON.

Hem! A Peaceful Napoleon would certainly be a fine thing! France would then ——

COUNT.

You acknowledge it! Give France, then, peace and glory! a glory unstained by widows' tears—a glory that shall triumph more in the yoked plough than in the harnessed battle-steed! a glory that shall unite, and not destroy, mankind; and I, even I ——

NAPOLEON.

It cannot be! War is my element! What is France to me, that would be Emperor of Europe? I might, indeed, found a dynasty, but alas! I have no children ——

COUNT.

Your brothers?

NAPOLEON.

Bah! Let us change the subject! The boy that shall succeed me is not yet born!

COUNT.

Your Majesty once spared my life!

NAPOLEON.

Did I? I had forgotten it!

COUNT.

'Tis fortunate that I have a better memory than your Majesty! I shall shortly be quits with you!

NAPOLEON.

My life is in no danger!

COUNT.

You are mistaken for once!

NAPOLEON.

Prove it!

COUNT. (*producing cords.*)

I intend to do so! You will soon see that I am right——

NAPOLEON.

Are you going to hang yourself?

COUNT.

How near are your guards?

NAPOLEON.

They will be here at twelve.

COUNT.

Go to that window—softly!—now look steadily into the gloom! What do you see?

NAPOLEON. (*looking.*)

There certainly is something like a man leaning against a tree. [*returns.*

COUNT.

It *is* a man—Delaborde by name!

NAPOLEON.

Delaborde?! Phsa! Count! you are at your old tricks; my secret police have got him safe enough!

COUNT.

Your secret police are as useless to yourself as dangerous to the people; they *in*vent more crimes than they *pre*vent!

NAPOLEON.

My prefect is at this moment arresting Delaborde at No. 23, Rue de la Chiffe!

COUNT.

The prefect is an ass! It was *last* night that Delaborde supped at No. 23, Rue de la Chiffe. But without more ado your Majesty shall see that the Count de Passy knows how to be grateful! (*calling.*) Martin! Martin!

Enter MARTIN.

MARTIN. (*aside.*)

It seems we shall have two to deal with instead of one!

COUNT.

Martin! some more claret! By St. Denis, how this reminds me of old times! Ah! your Majesty, do you recollect Cecile? Poor Cecile! heigho!

[*steals behind* MARTIN *and gags him.*

NAPOLEON.

What! still at your practical jokes?

COUNT.

Bind him!

NAPOLEON. (*binding him.*)

With all my heart! Poor devil! Take care, or you will choke him!

COUNT. (*taking a whistle from* MARTIN.)

Oh! no danger! (*locks him into a closet.*) The best part of the joke is to come! You think, then, Delaborde is at Paris!

NAPOLEON.

He is at Paris as certainly as that I am at Nangis!

[*the* COUNT *opens window—whistles—in leaps* DELABORDE, *who fires a pistol at the* EMPEROR, *but is instantly secured by the* COUNT.

COUNT. (*binding him.*)

No! your Majesty; Delaborde is at Nangis! and you had better go and look at him while I finish my dinner.

[*sits down at table.*

NAPOLEON. (*looking at* DELABORDE.)

It is, indeed, Delaborde! Fouché shall smart for this! I have, indeed, had a narrow escape!

COUNT. (*with his mouth full.*)

Oh! oh! Your Majesty confesses it at last! There are some papers in his bosom—on the right side; and on the left, lower down, you will find a dagger! which by this time would have been somewhere else, if it had not been for your Majesty's most active and intelligent prefect of police.

NAPOLEON.

And how did you discover all this?

COUNT. (*rising.*)

Why, simply thus! My tattered garments forced me into bad company; I overheard the whole plot, concealed in a closet in the kitchen of the house No. 23, Rue de la Chiffe. Ah! ha! M. Delaborde! when you next concoct an assassination, take the precaution of examining even the key-hole ——

DELABORDE.

You—my betrayer? A Legitimist?

COUNT.

Legitimists are not Assassins! They are only *Exiles!*

[*the* COUNT *brings in* MARTIN.

NAPOLEON. (*calling.*)

François! Jean Jomini!

Enter FRANÇOIS *and* JEAN JOMINI.

JEAN JOMINI.

Well! wonders never will cease in this extraordinary country; why, if there isn't my Martin, and some other ill-looking scoundrel, lying there for all the world like a pair of trussed rabbits, topsy-turvy! topsy-turvy!

FRANÇOIS.

This is totally incomprehensible ——

NAPOLEON.

You may well be astonished, General Muiron! Is this the care you take of your Emperor? M. le Comte, I shall see that your estates are restored to you, and I will raise you to a dukedom!

COUNT.

The estates which I consider my own, I will accept, but I cannot, Sir, receive honours at your hands; you have, pardon me, shed the blood of a Bourbon! I shall spend my revenues in exile!

NAPOLEON.

You are over bold to rebuke me thus, M. le Comte. Know that State necessity sometimes demands a victim. Had Charles lived, would England have been free? If the Bourbons be not scared, how shall France be glorious? I pitied the *man*, but I condemned the *Prince!*

COUNT.

If I could only find my poor wife I should be as happy as a King. Alas! what am I saying? To be a King in these

times is to be miserable; the butt of the unfeeling and the ignorant, and the victim of the tyrant Mob!

Enter CECILE *behind the* COUNT, *as a buy-a-broom girl.*

CECILE. (*at door.*)

Does one Jean Jomini still keep this house?

JEAN JOMINI.

What do you want? You cannot possibly be attended to now—they ——

CECILE.

But I want a night's lodging, I am wet, hungry, and I cannot trudge a step further. It 's of no use your talking! In I must come! Perhaps the gentleman will buy a broom or two of me. (*to* COUNT.) Buy a broom, Sir, buy a broom!

COUNT. (*turning round.*)

Thank you, my dear, but I 've got one ——

CECILE.

My husband!

COUNT.

Cecile! Cecile! [*they embrace.*

JEAN JOMINI.

Well! this is a most extraordinary country, even buy-a-broom girls fainting like their betters; topsy-turvy! topsy-turvy!

COUNT.

Cecile! Cecile! look up, my wife, Cecile! Some water, for the love of God, or I shall turn woman, and faint too. This sudden happiness is too much for me!

CECILE.

Is it really you? They told me you had been guillot ——

COUNT.

And you have been faithful, even to my memory! My own wife, Cecile!

CECILE.

But you are altered—and look as poor as I am ——

COUNT.

I am altered! But you, I declare, you look as young as ever. My estates have just been restored to me by one here, who is more changed than either of us!

NAPOLEON.

Do you not remember me?

CECILE.

The Emperor! Ah, pardon!

NAPOLEON.

Nay! Cecile! The obligation is on my side. You, my First Love, changed, by your disdain, Affection into Ambition; it is to you that France is indebted for her Emperor, for her glory, and for her renown: you rejected me; I did not commit suicide; I became a Hero!

CECILE.

Alas! I have much to answer for!

[*the guard file in, crying Vive l'Empereur.*

NAPOLEON.

See, how my children love me! Alas! that they are the only ones I have! Even a nephew worthy of me? [*musing.*

FRANÇOIS. (*pointing to* DELABORDE.)

Please your Majesty, what is to be done with the traitor?

NAPOLEON.

Release him!

FRANÇOIS.

Sire?

NAPOLEON.

Release him instantly! When Sovereigns shall be merciful, Conspiracy will die! Let him approach! (DELABORDE *approaches.*) Have you anything to say in your defence?

DELABORDE.

Nothing!

NAPOLEON.

You will be shot in an hour!

DELABORDE.

Sooner, if you please, I cannot prevent it ——

NAPOLEON.

One thing may yet save you—nay, give you fame and fortune ——

DELABORDE.

And that?

NAPOLEON.

Join my service!

DELABORDE.

One word from your mouth may consign me to the grave; but all you can utter, all you can do, mighty Emperor as you are, can never tear from the heart of Delaborde his allegiance to his rightful king! Vive le Roi!

NAPOLEON. (*aside.*)

I would give half my kingdom to have the fellow love me! (*to him.*) You love France?

DELABORDE.

Love France? France is father, mother, wife, children, everything to me! For her I have shed my blood! For her I will cheerfully lay down my life!

NAPOLEON.

If you love France, you must love me; for I am the restorer of France!

DELABORDE.

Of her Glory! yes! Of her Peace! no! I admire you, but I can never love you! I love the king! If you indeed were

the king's first General, I should wish to fall by your side, fighting against the enemies of France!

NAPOLEON.

You will again attempt my life, if I set you free?

DELABORDE.

No!

NAPOLEON.

But you will conspire with the Royalists?

DELABORDE.

Till I die!

NAPOLEON.

Go! you are free! As you will not be with me, be against me; go! But hope not to succeed in your plots! My *star* will ever be in the ascendant! If the Bourbons return, there will be Bonapartes who shall avenge me—The Empire I have founded shall never decay—farewell! [*exit* DELABORDE.

JEAN JOMINI.

Well! this is the most extraordinary country—the idea of letting one's own assassin go scot free; topsy-turvy.

[*a carriage heard driving up.*

COUNT.

Before you depart, may I ask your Majesty one question?

NAPOLEON.

With pleasure!

COUNT.

As I wish to reside in England, tell me frankly, do you really intend to invade that country?

NAPOLEON.

Bah! do you take me for a madman? It is the safest place you can go to! Invade England! Bah! Do I look like a suicide to go and break my head against those white cliffs!

Hear me, M. le Comte! if ever a ruler of France should seriously entertain a project so chimerical, he would deserve rather to be the president of a lunatic asylum than the monarch of a wise people! England is the natural ally of France! When the Bourbons are forgotten, we shall be friends, and then united together we will sway the world, resist the Barbarians of the North, and insure the peaceful progress of civilization. (*to* JOMINI.) And now, Jean Jomini, what have you to say for your servant here, who has conspired against my life?

JEAN JOMINI.

All I can say is, your Majesty, that I hope you will not let him go scot-free too—if it is only for bringing discredit on an honest man's house by his diabolical plots!

[NAPOLEON *signs to guards, who take him away.*

NAPOLEON.

And what can I do for yourself?

JEAN JOMINI.

Please your Majesty—nothing! Poor M. Laporte has left me so comfortable, that I really have nothing to ask for—nothing!

NAOPLEON.

I may at least recommend the Blue Bear to my friends ——

JEAN JOMINI.

For that I shall be much obliged to your Majesty; and I trust that all those who have come once, will be so well entertained, that they will never pass by without alighting at "The Blue Bear of Nangis," where, among my other anecdotes, I shall never fail to tell them the story of

"NAPOLEON'S FIRST LOVE."

Finis.

THE ADVOCATE OF DURANGO;

OR,

THE AVENGING SPIRIT.

A TALE OF MEXICO.

A Romantic, Domestic Drama,

IN FOUR ACTS.

THE
ADVOCATE OF DURANGO;
OR,
THE AVENGING SPIRIT.

A TALE OF MEXICO,
IN FOUR ACTS.

Persons represented.

DE SILVA, *a rich Noble of Mexico.*

ANTONIO, *his Son.*

LEYVA, *the Advocate; Nephew of* DE SILVA.

ROSAS, *Friend of* DE SILVA.

BERNARDO, *ditto.*

ESTRADA, *a Physician.*

SANCHEZ, *an old Ranchero.*

PEDRO, *ditto.*

DIEGO, *a ruined Haciendado* (*Servant to* LEYVA.)

GOMEZ, *Servant to* DE SILVA.

SEBASTIAN, *a young Ranchero.*

GUADALUPÈ, *Niece to* DE SILVA, *Cousin to* LEYVA.

CATALINA, *Wife to* SEBASTIAN.

INEZ, *Nurse to* GUADALUPÈ.

Haciendados, Rancheros, etc., etc.

Time—1823.

The Advocate of Durango.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Outside of a Posada, at Santa Clara, Wreaths of Flowers, etc.

Four or Five Rancheros discovered drinking, including SANCHEZ *and* PEDRO.

ALL.

Ha! ha! Bravo! bravo! Well sung, Sanchez. Encore! encore!

SANCHEZ.

My good friends, you are too hard upon an old man like me; but, as it is Sebastian's wedding-day, I suppose I must oblige you ——

PEDRO.

That's a good Sanchez! There will be plenty of time before they return—so sing away, sing away!

SANCHEZ.

Will you have the same song?

PEDRO.

To be sure! One can't have too much of a good thing.

SONG.

SANCHEZ.

I.

Oh, the Prairie life is a life of glee,
Where the wild breezes freely blow,

Where for hundreds of miles we find not a tree,
As galloping onwards we go;
On buffalo steaks do we all get fat,
And make the wild Indians flee,
Tho' we're scalped now and then, but a fig for that,
Oh, the Prairie life for me.

II.

Oh, the Prairie life is a life of glee,
You may talk of your snug fireside,
But we laugh at your taste, as we're wandering free,
And hunting the Prairies wide;
A fair stand-up fight with a grizzly bear,
No matter how fierce he may be,
We kill him, and eat him, and cast away care,
Oh, the Prairie life for me.

ALL.

Bravo! bravo!

[*distant music, which gradually approaches.*

PEDRO.

And finished just in time, for here comes our gallant Captain, followed by Sebastian, the lovely Catalina, and all the merry hearts of the village.

(*Enter* ANTONIO, SEBASTIAN, CATALINA, *and a crowd of Rancheros and Rancheritas.*)

SANCHEZ.

Welcome back, Captain Antonio! So you've given Catalina away, and Santa Clara will soon have a family the more.

ANTONIO.

I hope the population will be increased, with all my heart, good Sanchez. Wine! wine! A bumper to the happiness of Sebastian and Catalina—Sebastian the bravest Ranchero, and

Catalina the loveliest Rancherita in the good village of Santa Clara. [*all drink the toast.*

[*while the rest congratulate the happy pair,* ANTONIO *stands apart musing.*

ANTONIO. (*aside.*)

Happy Sebastian! Would I were a principal in such a fête as this. Instead of having given a bride away, would I were gazing on my own, as Sebastian is now. Guadalupè! Guadalupè! if thou lovest Leyva—poor Antonio's lost!

SANCHEZ.

The Captain seems melancholy. These young Caballeros can never see a wedding without wincing; faith, it almost makes my old blood circulate too freely to look at such a couple as Sebastian and Catalina! Now, my friends, one more health from our merry Captain, and then, hey for the fandango.

ALL.

Hear! hear! The health. Now, Captain—one more health! [ANTONIO *stands abstracted.*

SANCHEZ. (*bringing wine.*)

Captain—Captain—sorry to disturb your meditations, which I have no doubt are agreeable, remarkably agreeable, but we want to drink one more health; has not the gallant Antonio a Senora he prefers beyond all others?

ANTONIO.

Give me the wine! To Guadalupè de Silva, the fairest rose that blushes in all the Province of Durango!

ALL.

Guadalupè! Guadalupè!

SANCHEZ.

I thought the shoe pinched in that quarter. Every Caballero in the Province is in love with her. (*to* ANT.) Hope you may carry the day, for she is as good as she looks, and will make a most excellent wife.

PEDRO.

Aye, that will she; there 's not a poor family in Durango that has not learned to bless her name. Whenever misery or sickness enters a cottage in Santa Clara, down comes the Senora Guadalupè, and what with her purse and her advice, her soothing words, and her generous deeds, soon expels the cruel intruder! I wish you joy, Captain—I wish you joy!

ANTONIO. (*aside.*)

Alas! I know not yet that she does not love another. Guadalupè my wife! To have her in my arms, and hold her there for ever—to live with her, to die with her. Would Fortune had such happiness in store. (*aloud.*) But come, friends, come, Sebastian,—we waste precious time. (*selects a partner.*) The dance—the dance!

A number of Mexican Dances.

[*In the midst of the last dance a messenger enters hastily, gives a letter to* ANTONIO, *who pockets it and continues dancing. After another round, the messenger interrupts him again.*

MESSENGER.

Open it, Senor Antonio. That letter is of the utmost importance, and requires immediate dispatch. I was charged to ride for my life. I have not been an hour ——

[*music ceases.*

Important! immediate! why did 'nt you say so at first—where have you come from in an hour, Sirrah? (*pulls out the letter.*) Guadalupè's hand! and I to thrust it carelessly away. Let me see—let me see. [*reads.*

" Dear Cousin Antonio,—Would it were *dearest* Cousin,—
" Your father has been taken suddenly and alarmingly ill; your
" presence is instantly required. A messenger has also been
" dispatched to Durango to summon Cousin Leyva to draw up
" my poor uncle's will. He raves about your wild ways, about

" the Rancheros—in short, if you come not immediately, you " are like to lose your inheritance, which would deeply grieve

" Your faithful Cousin,

" GUADALUPÈ."

" I am alone in all this trouble, do, dear Antonio, come " instantly."

Guadalupè in trouble? My father ill? Leyva sent for? I fly. Good friends, I must leave you instantly, the Senor de Silva is dangerously ill—perhaps dying, while I dally with the time in your too pleasant company. Let not my absence damp your happiness, good Sebastian, you will not miss me if you pay due attention to those sparkling eyes! Adieu, "ma bella" Catalina. Farewell, good friends; pray heaven I'm yet in time to receive my father's blessing—let his wealth go where it will.

SEBASTIAN.

We will see you to your horse. Come, let us start our gallant Captain, at least so far, and give him a cheer of hope on his departure. [*exeunt all but* SANCHEZ *and* PEDRO.

PEDRO.

This is sad news, Sanchez. Even the rich Lord de Silva, who lives in such a magnificent palace, must come to a small house at last.

SANCHEZ.

Aye! aye! Death is your only fair architect—for rich and poor, the same plain modest tenement.

PEDRO.

Aye, and, as you may say, he is your only true Republican, that gives to all an equal share of ground, which all must equal keep. I wonder to whom De Silva will leave his immense estates?

SANCHEZ.

To whom? Why, whom should he leave them to, but his brave son, Antonio, I should like to know?

PEDRO.

What? The scapegrace, the madcap, the Captain of us merry devil-me-care Rancheros? I think, friend Sanchez, it is very doubtful whether Captain Antonio will get more than a legacy at the farthest.

SANCHEZ.

If Antonio is disinherited, then to whom will the property go? Tell me that.

PEDRO.

My dear Sanchez, that's more than I can say; perhaps to the bright-eyed Guadalupè, or stay—Senor de Silva, you know, Sanchez, made his large fortune in business, and was only ennobled lately by the Emperor. Such men as these don't willingly leave their hard-gotten treasures to idlers and spendthrifts, even tho' they be sons; or to beautiful maidens, who may become the prey of needy adventurers, even tho' they be nieces. No! no! Sanchez, take my word for it, money made in business will stick to business. The Advocate of Durango, who has his fingers in every landed proprietor's pocket. What do you say to Senor Leyva, the rich lawyer of Durango; won't the old Caballero make him his heir, think you?

SANCHEZ.

Nay, Pedro, I hardly think that, for Senor de Silva and this Senor Leyva's father were always at daggers drawn.

PEDRO.

Aye, but since Senor Leyva's father died, I have heard that De Silva has paid many attentions to the young lawyer who has gained such sudden wealth and notoriety; nay, has even had him staying at his palace. In fact, some go so far as

to say that it will be a match between Senor Leyva and Guadalupè, and that the old Caballero admires the talent, steadiness, and *property* of his nephew so much, that poor open-handed open-hearted Captain Antonio has as little chance of his father's estates as of Guadalupè for a wife.

SANCHEZ.

It will be a bad business if this mysterious lawyer puts his cousin's nose out of joint in this way. (*distant music.*) But come, Pedro, I hear the music again. The Captain is off, and they are all dancing by the side of the lake, while we two old gossips stand here talking of what we know nothing, and meddling with matters which we have no business with whatever.

PEDRO.

Right, Sanchez, let us go, and as all old men must, enjoy the melancholy pleasure of seeing our successors as happy as we once were ourselves. [*exeunt.*

SCENE II.

LEYVA'S *Office, at Durango—Parchments, Tin Boxes, etc., etc.*

LEYVA. (*discovered.*)

LEYVA.

'Tis fortunate this post obit's fallen in so much before I had expected it; 150,000 dollars for 40,000, which but four short years ago I lent the needy Juan, old Montano's heir! Was ever such a hit? They call me money-lender, hard, usurious! Fools! they say they must have money, well, then I must have my interest. That is but fair! But for me this Juan had not *lived* to come to these estates! His only wonder should be that my terms were not far harder! But for me he had starved, and all Montano's wealth been gathered to the state. There's that Diego, that mortgage was his ruin! Whose fault was that? Not mine! A gay Ranchero ever

must have gold, and wine, and horses; well, if he choose to barter all his father's lands for these, he courts his fate; his ruin is his own. How fierce the rascal was when I foreclosed; he swore that he would be my death! Idiot, does he think that he's the first whose threats I have despised? [*writes.*

(*Enter* DIEGO, *behind.*)

DIEGO. (*aside.*)

Ha! alone! (*half draws his sword.*) Now could I exact vengeance for all my wrongs. But yet I will not do it! No, he shall thrive on in all his villanies; he shall prosper on for me, till at the last, when all he seeks is just within his grasp; when all the nobles of Durango shall bow low before the lawyer Leyva; then, when in the very ecstacy of triumph, he looks upon the world as all his own, then, in the proudest moment of his life, this sword shall pierce his heart. (*aloud.*) Ho! Senor Leyva, you are over studious! Some grand new mortgage, eh?

LEYVA.

Ha! Diego, is it you, my good poor friend? Come for more money? Where's the security? I'll swear you have come for something!

DIEGO.

Not for myself! For you! Since you, I mean my own wild ways did ruin me, I have sustained my life by bearing messages. 'Tis not what I was born to, yet still I like the life—it has change of scene, fast galloping, and wild adventure, and suits me so far well. I bring you what will welcome be received, I doubt not. Your uncle is dying, and wants to square his account in this world, before he opens a new one in the next. I hope he'll not forget you in his will! If he does, I know whose fault 'twill be. He has sent for *you* to make it. [*gives letter.*

LEYVA. (*reading.*)

The hand is my dear Cousin's,—Guadalupè's! "Dying," —"draw up his will," "instantly," "faithful and affectionate Cousin," "Guadalupè." This craves despatch, indeed! Hark 'ye, Diego, men say I ruined you—you are poor and friendless!

DIEGO.

The poor generally are! Friends only swarm to gold!

LEYVA.

I now have oft to travel far from home, and need a trusty squire—servant I will not call you. You are the very man, brave—cool—acquainted with the country passes—and, as I have been told, a gallant swordsman?

DIEGO.

I can use my weapon on occasion.

LEYVA.

Enter my service then. The happy careless life that you will lead with me will be some reparation, even if I had been too hard upon you, which you well know I was not——

DIEGO.

You had your rights! The law 's the law!

LEYVA.

What say you to my offer?

DIEGO.

Well, Senor Leyva! a ruined man must not be delicate, but often serve where once he did command! I am your slave from now!

LEYVA.

Nay, say not slave! My squire, my friend, my trusty friend, Diego ——

DIEGO.

Well, what you will! But are you not afraid to take a man

whose house, at least, you helped to topple down, to tend your privacy; to travel with you upon lonely roads, where vengeance would be easy and secure!?

LEYVA.

Afraid, Diego? Have you learned nothing from experience? Suppose now, just for example's sake, you murder me; well, in killing me, you kill yourself no less. Where 's then your home, your gold, your horses, and your bread? I being dead, you change again an honourable life for beggar's mouldy fare, and squalid rags like these. No! good Diego! you will let me live!

DIEGO.

You argue well! You have no cause to be afraid! Where shall I change these "squalid rags"?

LEYVA. (*putting up papers.*)

You will find a handsome suit above, and then we will to horse. This urgent business will not brook delay. My poor dear uncle must not die without a will! Come—good Diego, come! What, kill the goose that lays the golden egg? My friend, my friend, I thought you had more sense. [*exeunt.*

End of Act 3.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Room in the Palace of DE SILVA.

GUADALUPÈ.

I hope he will forgive him! If he loved him as I do, he would forget follies, which, after all, result more from the buoyant spirits of a young and noble heart, than from any love of folly for itself. Poor Antonio! He is as gentle as he is brave, and as brave as he is wild! Would that my Cousin Leyva had arrived! My poor uncle will never rest until he has disposed of his estates! I hope he will forgive him, dear Antonio!

(*Enter* ANTONIO *from within.*)

ANTONIO.

Guadalupè! My dear father is better, and has forgiven me all—but on one condition ——

GUADALUPÈ.

And that?

ANTONIO.

Depends on thee, dear Cousin!

GUADALUPÈ.

On me?

ANTONIO.

Even so! (*aside.*) Alas! I that am so brave among the Rancheros, stand trembling like a coward before the eyes of Guadalupè.

GUADALUPÈ.

Say, dear Antonio, how does thy father's forgiveness depend on me?

ANTONIO.

Guadalupè, dear Guadalupè, can you forgive me? Can you pass over all my wild exploits? My frequent absences from home? Can *you* forget that Antonio de Silva has been the Captain of a band of wild Rancheros?

GUADALUPÈ.

Forgive? forget? Never, by word, by look, by gesture shall Guadalupè e'er remind Antonio of follies that are past, I hope, dear Cousin, never to return.

ANTONIO.

Thou art my guardian angel! As by the prayers of some bright Christian Saint, the sinner blots his 'count, so I by thee am saved! Had not thy gentle voice been raised in his behalf, Antonio had been homeless!

GUADALUPÈ.

Thou wrong'st thy father! It is so easy to forgive!

ANTONIO.

For Angels! What think'st thou, Guadalupè, thy reckless Cousin was about when thy note reached his hand?

GUADALUPÈ.

I am no witch?

ANTONIO.

But guess!

GUADALUPÈ.

Perchance you dallied with some village maid? Ha! Antonio. (*aside.*) He blushes—I'm undone!

ANTONIO.

I shame to say it; whilst my poor father lay groaning on his bed, his son was dancing at a village wedding!

GUADALUPÈ.

A wedding?

ANTONIO.

What ails thee, Guadalupè? I gave the bride away!

GUADALUPÈ.

Oh! No more?

ANTONIO.

And was not that enough? I long had promised good Sebastian, that, when he won the lovely Catalina, I would attend his marriage. You should have seen the happy pair; like dreamy wanderers, they stood whiles at the altar the blissful knot was tied; they seemed like statues, unendowed with life; their eyes intent on vacancy, and their ears scarce heeding the eventful vows their voices murmured forth! When all was done, by instinct rather than by conscious steps, they found their way outside. But then, when on their flushed and heated brows the soft air played, as if in welcome of true love's success, and like some potent spirit roused them from their trance, they clasped each other—thus. My own Guadalupè!

GUADALUPÈ.

Thine, love, for ever! [*they embrace.*

(*Enter* LEYVA, *who half draws his sword, but on* ANTONIO *suddenly turning, changes his attitude.*

LEYVA.

My dear Antonio! (*shakes hands.*) How fares my uncle, Cousin Guadalupè?

GUADALUPÈ.

Ill, Cousin Leyva, very ill! his anxiety for your arrival makes him worse; Antonio has but just left him. I will go and tell him you are come! [*going.*

ANTONIO.

Nay, Guadalupè, I will myself be the bearer of the good

news. (*at the door.*) Which good tidings shall I tell him first?

GUADALUPÈ. (*at the door.*)

My own Antonio! [*exit* ANTONIO.

LEYVA. (*aside.*)

Thwarted in my most darling hopes; foiled at the very moment I was about to speak the love, the now too fatal love I feel for Guadalupè—baffled. Yet not so—deceit and daring now must be my bosom friends; nay, if it need be, *crime!* I welcome thee; my heart is changed! I am not what I was! (*aloud.*) You love Antonio! You are betrothed?

GUADALUPÈ.

I do! I am!

LEYVA.

The brave Captain of Rancheros will make a good husband!

GUADALUPÈ.

He has promised to leave off his reckless ways, resign their company.

LEYVA.

He will keep his promise!

GUADALUPÈ.

Do you doubt him? The noble-hearted Antonio will ——

LEYVA.

Doubt him? The noble-hearted Antonio; fine word "noble-hearted." He will be his father's heir. Gold throws a gloss o'er many a reckless deed!

GUADALUPÈ.

Nay, Cousin Leyva, you are unkind! I have loved Antonio long; each sunny day of childhood and of youth that we have passed together has seen affection grow; and tho' until this hour our voices never spoke, our eyes had long betrayed the secret of our hearts. To what we felt so deeply, mere words

could add no strength, and shyly still our love had budded on; but now my dearest uncle's kindly warmth brings forth the full-blown flower!

LEYVA.

Has he consented to this match?

GUADALUPÈ.

He has! It is the seal of reconciliation! But you are ill ——

LEYVA.

Yes, Guadalupè, ill—harassed—I am no gay Captain of Rancheros, or rich man's heir; my nights are spent in spinning out my brains, not dancing among the lovely Rancheritas. Like the poor silkworm, the more I work the weaker still I grow—my toil is my destruction! I have gained no maiden's heart!

GUADALUPÈ.

Stay here awhile; Antonio and myself will soon recall the roses to your cheeks. Dear Cousin, you have done too much.

LEYVA.

Nothing to what I can do! Listen; old Archimedes said, "Had he a spot, one solid spot in immaterial space, he'd raise the world!" Be thou that spot to me. I have ambition, talents, gold, hard-earned gold. Weapons like these well used, will give me power; nay, Guadalupè, more, may even lead me to the throne in this adventurous land!

GUADALUPÈ.

Am I awake?

LEYVA.

Guadalupè! I found thee in Antonio's arms. You love him, dearly, devotedly, with all the madness of a woman's heart. His boyish fondness is to thee a man's unaltering love—his vain exploits are virtues in thine eyes—his vices, youthful

follies! As you love him, but with intenser force, I you—awake—arouse—tell him you were mistaken, knew not what love did mean! Be mine, mine! I, who *am* worthy of thee, promise to raise thee to rank, honour, power! Be mine—thou shalt be Empress of the Land! Be his—a Spendthrift's Wife!

GUADALUPÈ.

I am petrified with wonder!

LEYVA.

Thou wilt not! Thou shalt not wed Antonio, by all that's sacred. But I rave—he has thrown away his honour! Guadalupè de Silva will wed no idle boy!

GUADALUPÈ.

Guadalupè de Silva will wed the man she loves! It is thou hast lost thine honour—to address thy hateful vows to one betrothed—to forfeit all our friendship—to show thine heart most base! 'Tis Leyva, not Antonio, that has for ever parted with his honour! [*going.*

LEYVA. (*laughing.*)

Why, silly Cousin! Who would have thought so pitiful a jest should meet such good success? Antonio and Guadalupè—Guadalupè and Antonio—God bless you both! I only thought for good Antonio's sake to sound thy heart, dear Cousin! I prize his happiness beyond my own—believe me! and forgive the grief I've caused thee for its aim!

GUADALUPÈ.

Thy jest was over bitter, but I forgive thee, Cousin. In truth, I did believe thee. Thou should'st not act so well!

[*exit.*

LEYVA.

Act! Alas! alas! I am too terribly in earnest! The last few moments have transformed my soul! Until now, gold

has been my aim, my end, the undivided purpose of my life. Gold, that breeds hate 'tween bosom friends, and parent parts from child. Gold, that gains respect, honour, applause, renown, how vile soe'er the temple where enshrined. Gold, that can make hags handsome, thieves noble, fools wise, idiots senators, and all that's base gild o'er. Gold, that decks the ugliest bride with charms, and withered leaves will twine with smiling roses! Gold, that bends the cringing knee to crime, and spits in beggars' faces. Gold, the lack of which spoils beauty of its grace, robs genius of its fame, and angels turns to devils! Oh! Gold, my once-loved goddess! Thou now must quit thy more than regal state, and share this throne, my heart, with Love! with Love and Guadalupè! (*sits, but after a moment starts up.*) Yes! at all hazards, at the peril of my soul! My hate shall be the terror of the world! Antonio his heir? They little know the demon they have raised! Oh, jealousy, what a hideous monster art thou, that thus already hast deformed a noble mind! Changed high ambition into hate—that deadliest hate—the hate of rival hearts! Antonio is doomed! A crowd of horrible thoughts find entrance to my brain, and reason trample into dust. I Guadalupè see in gay Antonio's arms! Horrible picture! One single glance has turned the currents of three lives! Guadalupè in Antonio's arms! Do I dream, or am I mad? Oh. God! oh, God! (*enter* GOMEZ, LEYVA *suddenly changes.*) I know, good Gomez, my uncle is ready for me; I come—I come. (*exit* GOMEZ.) He's beggared in an hour. [*exit.*

SCENE II.

Bed Chamber of DE SILVA.

DE SILVA *on the Bed in loose grey Robe.*

[*the bed must have a trap.*

A small Table by the Bedside—A Writing Table, centre.

(*Enter* GOMEZ *and* LEYVA.)

LEYVA.

How fares it with you now, kind uncle?

DE SILVA.

Ill, good nephew, aye, ill to death, my friend! Give me a drink! A draught of wine will give me strength to set my house in order—then in peace depart!

LEYVA.

Nay, comfort, uncle, comfort! The will will ease thy mind, which ever, when the body's down, doth, coward-like, press harder; making mere skirmishes 'tween life and death, great battles!

DE SILVA.

'Tis ever so, indeed, kind nephew! Now, sit you down, and when 'tis finished, my good old friends, the Senors Rosas and Bernardo will be here to serve as witnesses of my signature!

[LEYVA *pulls out papers and sits.*

LEYVA.

You 'll have your will be brief, good uncle?

DE SILVA.

As short as corresponds with all due legal forms.

LEYVA.

Good! long wills make short account of large estates! Each extra sheet melts acres! Two pages will suffice. I have

here printed forms, with certain blanks, which, now with your good pleasure, I will proceed to fill.

[LEYVA *has two forms, one on each side of his table, and writes rapidly, so as to fill both, as if he were only writing one; in the one nearest the bed he inserts* ANTONIO'S *name in the right place, in the one nearest the audience, his own name where* ANTONIO'S *should be.*

DE SILVA.

Write "I, Nunez de Silva," ——

LEYVA.

I have already written everything, except the short passage which will be necessary to indicate your heir or heirs! Are there legacies?

DE SILVA.

One!

LEYVA.

And the estates?

DE SILVA.

Go to my dear son, Antonio!

LEYVA.

Ah! then I will make short work with it! (*writing, No.* 1.) —"give and bequeath all my estates of what nature or kind "soever, to my dear son, Antonio,—(*aside, No.* 2.) Dear "nephew, Leyva. (*aloud*). De Silva!" And the legacy?

DE SILVA.

And to my dear nephew, Leyva de Silva ——

LEYVA.

My ever kind uncle! (*No.* 1.)—"and to my dear nephew, "Leyva,—(*aside, No.* 2.) Dear son, Antonio. (*aloud.*) De "Silva." Yes!

DE SILVA.

Ten thousand dollars to be paid to him on my decease by the aforesaid Antonio de Silva.

LEYVA.

My dear uncle! You overvalue my poor services. (*aside No.* 2.)—"aforesaid Leyva,—(*aloud No.* 1.) Aforesaid An- "tonio de Silva." Is that all? Guadalupè? Your other brother's child?

DE SILVA.

Will be Antonio's wife, good nephew!

LEYVA.

Indeed! I wish them joy! Then the will is finished. I will summon the witnesses. Gomez! Gomez! are the Senors Rosas and Bernardo come?

GOMEZ. (*at door.*)

They are, Senor Leyva!

LEYVA.

Show them up.

DE SILVA.

I should have left you more, good Nephew, but that your brains will ever yield you plenty; while poor Antonio ——

LEYVA.

Nay; speak not of it. I am exceeding rich, dear uncle—all my ventures prosper. Indeed, including what you have so kindly left me, I do believe I am richer than yourself, or e'er Antonio will be.

(*Enter* ROSAS *and* BERNARDO. *They snub* LEYVA.)

DE SILVA.

My good old friends, how do ye both? This is, I fear, well nigh the last—last time, that I shall summon you to do me service, which, ever you have willingly performed.

ROSAS.

So ill, De Silva? I grudge to do thee this.

BERNARDO.

And so do I. I fear 't will be the last.

DE SILVA.

Nephew, dear nephew!——

ROSAS. (*aside to* BERNARDO.)

"Dear nephew!" Mark you that? Antonio's not the man.

DE SILVA.

Give me the will. For ever I have heard, that men's last testaments should be read before they 're signed.

LEYVA.

Good uncle. It is wise. [*gives No.* 1.

BERNARDO. (*aside to* ROSAS.)

"Good uncle!" Mark! Leyva, for all you 're worth.

ROSAS.

Good Senor Leyva, I hope your health is good.

LEYVA. (*significantly.*)

I shall be better *presently.*

BERNARDO.

Sweet Senor Leyva, I did not mark you when we came in; the estates—very large?

LEYVA.

Nay, not so large as I could wish; but still they'll do,—they'll do. [*goes up.*

BERNARDO. (*to* ROSAS.)

The largest estates in the province. What a conscience the man must have. He is the heir, depend on't.

ROSAS.

Indeed, I think so.

ROSAS. (*to* LEYVA R.)

If I can be useful, command me.

BERNARDO. (*to* LEYVA L.)

Any service I can do—most proud.

DE SILVA.

Kind Leyva, the will is quite correct. A pen, good Leyva, I will sign. [LEYVA *gives pen.*

LEYVA.

Good Senors, please observe. (*they approach.*) 'Tis right you mark my uncle's signature. [DE SILVA *is about to sign.*

LEYVA.

One moment, uncle; I see a word left out. Mark you? One of the "Antonios." 'Tis lucky I observed it.

[*takes the will to the table, pockets it, pretends to write, and returns with No.* 2.

How could I be so careless! One of the "Antonios;" a most important word. Now, uncle, you may sign.

DE SILVA. (*signing.*)

I feel the weight of sickness grow lighter with each stroke. There!

LEYVA. (*at centre table.*)

Good Senors, sign you here.

ROSAS. (*signing.*)

One of the "Antonios." Antonio's the heir. I'll spend no further trouble on this lawyer.

BERNARDO. (*signing.*)

I espied a large "Antonio" at the top. I have wasted courtesies.

(*Enter* ANTONIO. *Goes to bed.*)

Senor Estrada, the physician, is below. Shall he come up, dear father?

DE SILVA. (*patting his head.*)

My dear boy——

ROSAS. (*aside.*)

'Tis Antonio!

DE SILVA.

I trust you will reform, and imitate your cousin ——

BERNARDO. (*aside.*)

'Tis Leyva!

DE SILVA.

My dearest son ——

ROSAS. (*aside.*)

'Tis Antonio!

DE SILVA.

Be guided by his advice; for Leyva is steady, sensible, and kind!——

BERNARDO. (*aside.*)

'Tis Leyva!

DE SILVA.

Let the physician come. (*exit* ANTONIO.) Good friends, you may retire; and you, kind nephew; but leave me here my will. 'Tis meet that ere I die I read it once again.

LEYVA. (*aside.*)

Confusion! I have no choice. (*aloud.*) There 'tis, (*puts it on little table.*) dear uncle! I pray Heaven the physician may yet have power to do thee good! [*exit.*

ROSAS.

'Tis Antonio; for Senor Leyva prays his uncle may recover.

BERNARDO.

He wills him well; Antonio is the man. [*exeunt.*

DE SILVA. (*alone.*)

Would that Antonio resembled Leyva more! I fear he'll

make my hard-earned money fly. Were it not for Guadalupè, his cousin had been my heir.

(*Enter* GUADALUPÈ, ANTONIO, *and Physician.*)

DE SILVA.

Ha! good Estrada, I am past thy skill,—I am prepared to die.

ESTRADA.

Nay, Senor, there is hope.

[ANTONIO *and* GUADALUPÈ *look up to heaven.*

DE SILVA.

I neither hope, nor fear. Hope is for the young; fear for the guilty; but resignation's fittest for the old. I am content that Death should have his way.

ESTRADA.

Perfect quiet is absolutely necessary.

GUADALUPÈ.

May neither of us stay?

ESTRADA.

No one. A bell by the bedside must be his sole companion. Have you medicines at hand?

GUADALUPÈ.

Of nearly every kind.

ESTRADA.

'Tis well. Senor, you must take immediate what I send. Be still; be silent, and all may yet be well. Come, my young friends, I must not leave ye here.

GUADALUPÈ.

One moment. [*exit* ESTRADA.

[*they kneel at the bed.*

DE SILVA.

My children, it may chance, in spite Estrada's hopes (which

wishes may be only), I die ere many hours, p'rhaps ere again we meet,—when I'm alone, asleep.

ANTONIO.

Oh, say not so, dear father!

GUADALUPÈ.

Dear uncle!

DE SILVA.

I somehow fancy it will be so; and dying men know more than they may tell. Take, then, my blessing, while I am here to give,—you, to receive. Farewell! God bless ye both!

[*slow music, during which* ANTONIO *and* GUADALUPÈ *rise and slowly exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Room in the same.

(*Enter* LEYVA.)

LEYVA.

If he read it, I am lost. Would all were quiet—I might then ——

(*Enter* ROSAS *and* BERNARDO *disputing.*)

These tedious old fools. [*goes up and takes a book.*

ROSAS.

I am still in doubt, Bernardo!

BERNARDO.

And so am I, good Rosas.

ROSAS.

What if it were neither?

BERNARDO.

How?

ROSAS.

Suppose it were Guadalupè; there would be an heiress——

BERNARDO.

I'll pay her some attention!

ROSAS.

You carry off an heiress?

BERNARDO.

And why not, pray?

ROSAS.

Why? Simply because thou art too old—too far gone, Bernardo!

BERNARDO.

Old! Far gone!

ROSAS.

I, indeed, may have a chance! being scarcely, as one may say, come to years of discretion.

BERNARDO.

Oh, monstrous! why thou art seventy if an hour—I'll not yield her to thee!

ROSAS.

If thou splutterest so, thou wilt drop out thy teeth; that is, if they *be* thine, which I for one doubt! Tell me, Bernardo, from whose mouth hadst thou them? Thou art not even the third hast chewed with them, I warrant.

BERNARDO.

Villain! As for thee, thou art entirely made up of dead men's appurtenances; thy hair belonged to a scavenger, thy teeth to a tobacco chewer, and thy nose was ingeniously concocted out of the hollows in thy cheeks and the furrows on thy brow. The calves of thy legs, too, where gottest thou them, thou patched scarecrow? Bah!

ROSAS.

I am choking!

LEYVA. (*coming down.*)

What's this? What is the difference between you?

ROSAS.

Compare me with him,—the chop-fallen old skeleton——

BERNARDO.

What! liken me to Rosas, the mummy-shrivelled goblin——

LEYVA.

Nay, good Senors, be not so hot—I mean, what is the quarrel between you?

BOTH.

Guadalupè——

LEYVA.

Guadalupè!

ROSAS.

Tell me, kind Senor Leyra, will she have *all?*

BERNARDO.

Tell *him* anything, but tell me the truth—Is she the heiress?

LEYVA.

Really, Senors——

ROSAS.

Will she have as much as Antonio?

BERNARDO.

Has he left anything considerable to you?

LEYVA.

Really, Senors, it is a breach of confidence; but you have both been so civil, so kind to me that I will for once break through my invariable rule. Be secret; she *will* have nearly as much as Antonio (within ten thousand dollars), and he *has*

left something considerable to me! (*aside.*) I fence my beating heart with gaiety and smiles, and gull such fools as these!

[*goes up.*

(*Enter* ANTONIO *and* GUADALUPÈ.)

[*During this scene,* ROSAS *and* BERNARDO *pay ridiculous attentions to* GUADALUPÈ.

ANTONIO.

Dear Cousin, you will joy to hear that the Physician still has hope——

LEYVA.

I do, indeed! Is my uncle more composed?

ANTONIO.

Much more! He is to be kept quiet; in fact, alone——

LEYVA. (*suddenly.*)

Alone?

ANTONIO.

It is Estrada's strict command! He has taken an opiate.

LEYVA.

Should he awake and need assistance?

ANTONIO.

I shall sit up here. My father has a bell; I can be with him in an instant!

LEYVA.

If you'll allow me, at twelve I will relieve you; I owe my uncle much for all his kindness to me——

ANTONIO.

With all my heart—at twelve the watch be thine.

GUADALUPÈ.

Senor Rosas, Senor Bernardo, you are too obliging. Will it please you take refreshments, ere you go?

ROSAS. (*aside.*)

A polite hint for Bernardo. (*aloud.*) I shall be here to-morrow.

BERNARDO.

Adieu, fair Queen! I shall be here to-morrow. [*exeunt.*

ANTONIO.

Why, Guadalupè—two more conquests! The poor old men are mad!

LEYVA. (*aside.*)

He may awake! Time is precious! (*aloud.*) Cousin Antonio! What say you? I 'll change guards with you! I feel I cannot sleep!

ANTONIO.

As you please, good Leyva, I 'll come to you at midnight. Be watchful!

LEYVA.

I will not fail!

ANTONIO.

Good night!

GUADALUPÈ.

Good night, Cousin Leyva! No more cruel jests ——

LEYRA.

No more "*jests.*" Good night, Guadalupè! (GUADALUPÈ *and* ANTONIO *talk at back of stage.*). How long they are! She gazes in his eyes, as if to pierce beyond and fire his very soul! (ANTONIO *kisses* GUADALUPÈ.) That kiss has murdered him! (*they exeunt looking at each other.*) Gaze on! gaze on! and linger o'er thy love! Thou shalt not have her long! (*after a pause.*) He may be reading! Each moment 's fraught with danger! Delay is death! (*another pause.*) How silent is this house! The old man's soul will part at least in peace. In peace? Oh, peace! I ne'er shall know thee more! I am not fashioned in that marble mould that murders even nature, and parts remorse from crime! If monsters such there be, 'tis only where the mind, like some

most savage forest wilderness, impervious even to the light of heaven, and trodden never save by wildest beasts, has known no touch of intellectual man! (*another pause.*) How crime leads on to crime! Like some devoted bark, that by the driving tempest has been forced within a dangerous reef, the perils she has 'scaped seem but the entrance to a new despair, return, impossible—advance, a fearful death! She may contend awhile, a little while, with fate, 'mid rocks, shoals, whirlpools, sands, but at the last she is certain still to strike, then sink, and all is night! So I, the barriers of honour past, behold the gulf to which my path must lead, yet cannot turn aside! The forger now must steal! If the opiate work, and he do sleep, all's well! If not, the theft may lead, —oh, horror! I will not think so basely of myself; my friend, my patron, my uncle and my benefactor, a poor old feeble dying man! No, no! I am not black enough for that! (*clock strikes eleven.*) Hark! all is quiet! In nature's common course, he cannot last till morning? Death's hand hath laid its impress on his brow, and stamped its clammy mandate on his cheek! *The will*, and I am safe! [*exit, music.*

SCENE IV.

music.] *Bed Chamber of* DE SILVA (*as before.*)

(*Enter* LEYVA, *on tiptoe.*)

LEYVA.

He sleeps! the will is where I left it!

[LEYVA *steals round the back of stage, and* DE SILVA *gradually awakes.*

DE SILVA.

Heaven have mercy on my soul! I have not long to live!

The hour for the grand secret is at hand! I have often heard death warns before he strikes! My children! I will ring for them. But first, I will again read o'er the will which gives them happiness and wealth!

[LEYVA *is about clutching the Will when* DE SILVA'S *hand, thrust out of bed, anticipates him.*

(*Strong chord.*)

LEYVA.

Ha! My crime will be discovered. He will alarm the house! Antonio will be rich, and Guadalupè ——

DE SILVA. (*reading.*)

Merciful powers! A forgery! Leyva is then a villain!

[*reaches at bell.*

LEYVA. (*removing bell.*)

Old man! thy doom is sealed! I *am* a villain, and I prove it thus!

DE SILVA.

Mercy! Antonio! Guadalupè!

(LEYVA *smothers him.—music.*)

[LEYVA *puts the bed in order, and places the Will again on the table.* LEYVA *comes down.*

LEYVA.

He would have died a natural death in half an hour! That table holds Antonio's ruined hopes—and Guadalupè's mine! (*opposite side to bed the ghost of* DE SILVA *appears.*) Thou art dead! Thou art dead! Down! down!

[*Music.*—LEYVA *shrieks and falls at side of bed. Enter* ANTONIO *and* GUADALUPÈ—*they open bed curtains and the body is seen.*

End of Act II.

ACT III.

A LAPSE OF SIX MONTHS.

SCENE I.

Room at LEYVA'S (DE SILVA'S) *Palace.—An Alcove showing Ball Room.—Tables with gold and silver goblets.—Wine, etc.* R. *and* L.

LEYVA. (*alone; he is more haggard.*)

'Tis true, the old wives' tale then, that spirits walk the earth, and oft in shadowy embodiment appear to guilty minds alone; I saw him as distinct as now I see this hand—this withered shrunken hand! To appear so soon, so instant on his death; 'tis marvellous! It must be then, the ghosts of murdered men have power to haunt and torture those who have sent them home so sudden to account. Just retribution! Thus ghosts kill in their turn the men who murdered them. How pale, how thin, how deathlike do I grow! These spirits of the dead do blanch my cheeks, and suck the marrow from my bones, till that my heart that once did beat so bold cries quarter to the vision of a night—the unsubstantial image of a man. Alas! that I should live, a trembling coward, a conscience-stricken wretch. Yet, kill myself I dare not; so fearful looms the world beyond the grave. No hope! no hope! so deep the gulf I dream the Murderer's home!

(*Enter* ANTONIO.)

ANTONIO.

Dear cousin, you are too generous, too kind! Tho' disinherited by my poor father (alas! now six months dead), for

my wild freaks among the Rancheros, I find in you, his heir, a friend less rigid in his justice! One hundred thousand dollars as Guadalupè's wedding portion; it is too much, indeed it is, kind cousin.

LEYVA.

Too much for Guadalupè! No! Not all the riches that lie wrecked in Ocean's coral caves, nor all the treasure that the earth conceals in her golden veins profound, were dowry large and bright enough for her!

(*Enter* GUADALUPÈ.)

My dear kind cousin!

LEYVA.

I only do my duty; in leaving you dependent both on me my uncle knew I should be kind as he,—and, I speak not boastfully, Antonio, tend better the estates!

ANTONIO.

Indeed, I think it well, but strange, as by his kindness to the last I thought myself his heir——

GUADALUPÈ.

Yes; it was strange!

LEYVA.

As often Fortune rains on one poor head ills that would swamp a thousand, so with her favours is she equal fickle, giving yet more to him that has too much! As loadstone iron, or rolling snowball snow, so gold attracteth gold! The procreant earth breeds not so fast as Gold! Knowing how rich I already was, *'twas* strange.

GUADALUPÈ.

How pale and ill you have looked lately, cousin! What is it? Let your poor cousin know? [LEYVA *abstracted.*

LEYVA. (*aside.*)

Married to-morrow! Remorse has let it come to this—I have not dared to strike!

GUADALUPÈ.

Tell me, dear Leyva, what is it ails thee? Thou should'st be well and happy, for 'tis to thee Antonio and I owe all our joy! Kind deeds like thine should ever throw their sunshine on the generous heart.

LEYVA. (*aside.*)

Her voice would melt a fiend! I will not do it! (*turns, sees* ANTONIO.) Antonio steels me. Hate is conqueror! (*aloud.*) Kind deeds like mine! Oh, yes; I am very kind.

GUADALUPÈ.

Indeed, you are very ill!

LEYVA.

Nay! Nay! But faint,—but faint—Some Wine. This weakness will be gone. I wonder that our guests arrive not; friends should use Eagle-speed to hie to Fêtes so full of joy as this, upon thy wedding eve! [*goes up.*

GUADALUPÈ *to* ANTONIO.

Indeed, but he looks ill!

ANTONIO.

Well, dearest, we must nurse him, and in the very madness of our bliss find still some thought for him. [*goes up.*

LEYVA. (*with flowers.*)

Guadalupè, mark these flowers! Time was, I looked as fresh and bright as they!——

GUADALUPÈ.

Before our uncle died!

LEYVA.

A single night will make them droop, as I did—a single night! (*gives her the flowers.*) I have a hidden grief!

GUADALUPÈ.

Our poor dear uncle's death! I recollect upon that dreadful night we found you fainting near his bed.—The kind old man!

LEYVA. (*going up.*)

The kind old man!

ANTONIO. (*brings flowers.*)

Guadalupè dearest, let me deck thee with these flowers; these smiling roses will more lovely seem, entwined within thine hair!

GUADALUPÈ.

Nay, then, Antonio, but with *these*—dear Leyva gave them to me ——

ANTONIO.

Well, dearest—which you will. [*they retire up.*

LEYVA.

"Dear Leyva gave them to me." I will poison him to-night. (*produces a paper packet.*) This little thing hath stolen sleep from these poor eyes for weeks, nay, months! Oh, it is dreadful to have my enemy within my power, and yet not strike him down. Ten grains of this, he's dead, no cunning can tell how! How often have I held it o'er his cup? But Guadalupè's image stayed my arm. For her sweet sake I let Antonio live. "Dear Leyva gave them me." Antonio dies to-night!

ANTONIO. (*coming down.*)

Cousin, look at Guadalupè. The flowers you gave her I've twined within her hair! Is she not beautiful?

LEYVA. (*turning away.*)

I fear you will die of love, gay Cousin!

ANTONIO.

Here are our guests, at last! [*music.*

[GOMEZ *shows in* ROSAS, BERNARDO, *ladies, etc., etc. Those who are not speaking, keep in the Ball Room, which is partly seen.*

ROSAS.

What a prince this lawyer is! These goblets are solid gold!

How he must have wheedled his old uncle! One would have thought he had enough before with all his d——d parchments and mortgages. Ha! Bernardo, how goes it? Our rivalry is at an end! We have lost the day!

BERNARDO.

We have indeed! What dowry does Senor Leyva give his Cousin, do you know?

ROSAS.

To be sure I do! Is there anything I do not know? Nothing! I make a point of ferreting out everything relating to other people's affairs, they are so much more interesting than my own!

BERNARDO. (*aside.*)

He has no affairs of his own. They are all mortgaged! Leyva sucked him dry long ago. (*aloud.*) You were wrong about the will?

ROSAS.

Yes, I confess it! Hearing Antonio's name, as being in the will, I certainly thought it must be for the principal estates, not for a paltry legacy! But the crafty nephew was more than a match for the wild son ——

BERNARDO.

But the dowry, how much is it?

ROSAS.

One hundred thousand dollars!

BERNARDO.

One hundred thousand dollars? Is that his craftiness?

ROSAS.

The essence of it. To be illiberal would excite suspicion; and what are 100,000 dollars out of the great Santa Clara property?

BERNARDO.

True! I see his policy! Gold buys off scandal—and of ill-

gotten gains, a part, well spent, takes off the taint that did alloy the whole. Some wounded consciences build churches. He dowers off his Cousin—a cunning rogue!

ROSAS.

A villain ——

BERNARDO.

A swindling lawyer!

ROSAS.

And a vile cheat —— [LEYVA *comes down.*

BERNARDO.

Ha! Senor Leyva, give me your hand again. You are looking so well.

ROSAS.

Dear Senor Leyva, pray let me congratulate you. You are the prince of cousins! [LEYVA *calls* BERNARDO *aside.*

ROSAS.

What can he have to talk confidentially about to such a fellow as Bernardo?

LEYVA. (*aside to* BERNARDO.)

You need not say who told you, but Senor Rosas has spread it about Durango, that he knew your mother, and she was a fishwoman—and not a good one! ——

BERNARDO.

Not a good fishwoman! I'll choke him like a dog!

LEYVA.

Wait till the ball is over!

BERNARDO.

At your request, I will, but otherwise —— [*goes up.*

LEYVA. (*beckons to* ROSAS, *who rushes forward.*)

Rosas! my good Rosas!

ROSAS. (*aside.*)

How familiar! He likes me!

LEYVA.

Dear Rosas! I have your welfare much at heart ——

ROSAS.

You have had all my property ——

LEYVA.

But your good name? Bernardo has whispered it about—you know how whispers travel—the wife you are so fond of speaking of as having been so beautiful, was only a Negress, and not—your wife!

ROSAS.

A Negress—not my wife! I'll cut him into pieces ——

LEYVA.

Wait till the ball is over.

ROSAS.

As *you* wish it, I will—but —— [*goes up.*

LEYVA.

I cannot smile. I am too sick at heart—the murderer never smiles! (*sinks into a chair—the dance proceeds.*) I will not deeper in. Besides, he is so young, so full of hope; and Gaudalupè loves him. Ah! there's the damned impulse spurs me on! I killed his father! Alas, alas! The kind old man! Remorse—remorse! I feel thee gnawing here; here, at my very heart, corroding all the powers that pleasure give to life! I will spare the son—I will let him live. I then shall sleep once more,—once more sleep sound. Oh! long forgotten joy!

No more watch serpents round my unhallowed bed,
Glide on the gloom, and ope their horrid jaws,—
Darting their forked tongues, with fiery eyes,
At me! No more ——
Hear dismal groans, from hollow darkness come,
With fear-struck murder's wailing woful cry,

Borne on the breeze that fans the assassin's home;
But heard by none but me!
No more shall I arouse me at the toll
Of midnight's solemn stroke, to feel the sweat
Fall off my bones, (for flesh I have none now,)
As stalactites drop water. I repent!—
I will not murder more!

[*turns and sees* ANTONIO *and* GUADALUPÈ *waltzing; the rest looking on in admiration.*

His arm around her waist,—their mouths so close,
That breath melts into breath, and whispers Love,
So softly, that their lips scarce seem to move!
Her hair plays with his cheek, till it doth glow
With amorous joy, to be so sweetly wooed!
Her senses lost—abandoned—as she whirls,
The wonder and the beauty of the world!
If poison fail, I'll stab him in his sleep!
He shall not clasp her more.

[*drinks wine; the dance ceases, and* ANTONIO *and* GUADALUPÈ *come down.*

GUADALUPÈ.

So downcast, Cousin Leyva. Fie! We miss your company. You did not see our dance.

LEYVA.

I did observe you. Antonio dances well. I think he learned among the Rancheritas. The maidens dance like sylphs at Santa Clara ——

GUADALUPÈ.

No more of that. Fie, Cousin!

ANTONIO.

Leyva, our kind friends miss the master of the fête. They wonder that you do not choose a belle, and join our merry sport ——

LEYVA.

Nay; then I will oblige them; that is, if you will yield me our fair Cousin for a set.

ANTONIO.

For a single dance; but recollect I cannot spare her more.

LEYVA.

One would think you were about to part from her, instead of to be married,—you are such a miser of her company. The dance, dear Cousin, come—the dance—the dance!

[LEYVA *and* GUADALUPÈ *go up.*

ANTONIO.

How wild my Cousin looks. I am sure there is something weighing on his mind. If he would speak, perhaps I could comfort him. An unshared grief has broken many a heart.

[*sits down.* LEYVA *and* GUADALUPÈ *dance; then* LEYVA *restores her to* ANTONIO, *and comes to the front.*

LEYVA.

On straws hang lives:—this dance has sealed his fate.
Welcome, remorse. So Guadalupè's mine,
I clasp ye both together to my heart! [*drinks.*
Within the bosom conscious of a crime,
As in a festering tomb, the Fiend of Fiends
Stands sentinel,—his countersign, Despair;
Nor lets one thought, that is not wholly his,
Pass out the dreary portals of his watch.
I could not spare Antonio, if I would.

[*puts the poison into a goblet.*

My friends, come—come; we have wasted time too long. A health to Guadalupè. Antonio, drink to Guadalupè's health.

[*gives the poison to* ANTONIO. *Ghost rises behind* ANTONIO. LEYVA'S *face becomes horribly distorted.*

ANTONIO.

To Guadalupè's health ——

[*raises his eyes, sees* LEYVA'S *expression of face, and lets fall the goblet.*

LEYVA.

Away! away! thou hideous phantom, hence!

[*falls fainting; all crowd round, and the curtain falls.*

End of Act III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Night.

LEYVA. (*haggard and ill.*)

Married,—and parted! Parted even on the wedding day! 'Twas executed well. Gone with Diego, at the "Emperor's" summons, to the Court. 'Twas well devised! His father's spirit shall not save him now. Another hand shall kill him far away, where I am not, and so I'll trick this ghost that ever haunts my footsteps as I walk, and robs me of my prey! Old man! Wilt never rest? I did but send thee a little ere thine hour to meet thy doom! Alas! alas! my murderer's eyes are feasted upon spectres,—gaunt images which conscience shadows forth on the unsubstantial air! Diego will make all sure. A practised hand and nerves no ghost can shake—secure my triumph now! How bold the villain was! A rugged nature that no virtue knows but to obey his master's will. The night draws on apace—the night that yields Antonio's bride to me; Antonio away! All is silent; Inez alone remains—when she departs! She will not yield; but when she finds her husband comes not back,—when good Diego, with a likely tale of robbers on the road, brings back the corse of poor Antonio,—then my triumph is secure, and Guadalupè will be Leyva's bride! I'll to her now, if Inez be away; 'twill seem but kindness! What cunning pleas the erring heart invents to humour all its passionate desires! [*exit.*

SCENE II.

Night.

GUADALUPÈ'S *Boudoir.*

INEZ *and* GUADALUPÈ.

INEZ.

Nay, don't give way so; he will soon come back again—to-morrow ——

GUADALUPÈ.

To-morrow! There are ages in the word—to-morrow! Each minute is a year that severs bride from love! I shall be old as thou ere dear Antonio come; "to-morrow" sounds like "never."

INEZ.

Not so, my sweet one! Let fancy conquer grief! Suppose yourself not married—blot out to-day, and think you dream 't the wedding. Imagine that it is to come; to-morrow, perhaps, or some fine day next week—I could imagine so ——

GUADALUPÈ.

You could imagine! Thine hair is silvered, nurse! What matter is 't to Winter that the Spring is pinched by cruel frosts? Or what to Autumn's withered yellow leaves, the loss of Summer's sweet and dewy breath? *You* could imagine! I tell thee, nurse, I die ere he return, tho' it be but to-morrow!

INEZ.

Indeed, I cannot comfort you; would that I could!

GUADALUPÈ.

Leave me awhile, I will to prayer, and pray for sleep—sleep that may last till my sweet husband come. Go, then, good nurse, thou art weary ——

INEZ. (*rubbing her eyes.*)

I weary? why bless your heart I am wakeful as an owl ——

GUADALUPÈ.

I see you are! but leave me, do, good nurse. I had rather be alone.

INEZ.

Well, well! Be sure you go to sleep; and mind you don't dream! As for me—I will sit up and watch!

[*exit nearly asleep.*

Slow music—GUADALUPÈ *prays.*

(*Enter* LEYVA.)

LEYVA.

At prayer! I cannot take her thus! How fervently she prays—prays for Antonio! for hated Antonio's weal those eyes are raised to heaven—for him those lips breathe incense to her God—incense that lades the air with odours, sweet odours of her love! her love for him who never will return!

GUADALUPÈ. (*rising.*)

My cousin here—dear Leyva, this is kind. You come to give me hope, to cheer my sad suspense, to say a word of comfort to the wretched Guadalupè! Oh! when will he return?

LEYVA. (*hesitating.*)

To-morrow—*perhaps*, sweet cousin ——

GUADALUPÈ.

Oh, say not "perhaps," good Leyva! My life hangs on thine answer—say! he will certain come to morrow?

LEYVA.

I dare not tell thee now; to-morrow thou shalt know all. In the mean time, I commend you to your bed, while I go pray that sleep may visit thee; that partial God who mocks the wretch's groan, and dallies with the blest! Good night! sweet cousin, sleep! sleep! to-morrow thou shalt know! [*going.*

GUADALUPÈ. (*stopping him.*)

"Dare not tell me,"—that strange expression of thine eyes —"to-morrow thou shalt know." No, Leyva, no! thou shalt not leave this room till poor Antonio's wife knows all thy dark vague speech implies! If it be what I fear, a wife should ever know the peril of her husband! Then speak—good Cousin—speak!

LEYVA.

Indeed I dare not—it will break thine heart ——

GUADALUPÈ.

Nay, nay! I am prepared, Antonio will be absent long—a month away? You see, I 'll bear the worst ——

LEYVA.

A month away! Alas that I should have to utter it—Antonio's false—the summons mere pretence—e 'en now he sleeps in other ——

GUADALUPÈ.

Antonio false?

LEYVA.

A Rancherita's arms have greater charms than thine—marked you not Catalina?

GUADALUPÈ.

Liar! I renounce thee; thy friendship's poison, and I loathe thy roof. I fly to seek my husband; Antonio false! villain thou art to say so! [*goes to glass window.*

LEYVA. (*stopping her.*)

Thou shalt not stir a step! I swear Antonio is false—he loves thee not; 'tis I—'tis I ——

GUADALUPÈ.

Viper! Nay, I fear thee not ——

LEYVA.

Hear me!

GUADALUPÈ.

Go on, Sir—I attend!

LEYVA.

Thee I have loved for years—for thee I gathered gold, and stained my soul with usury—for thee I wasted youth and health in search of dross which should obtain me power—nay, even perhaps a throne. While I was plodding on, nor dared to speak till that my wealth were won, the smirk Antonio, ever in thine eye, stole all my treasure from me; from that hour I threw ambition to the winds, and panted for revenge. From that hour, unlawful love, that golden entrance to a hell on earth, has been at once my torture and my joy! my bliss and my despair! I know the cup is poisoned, yet still will quaff it to the dregs! Thou shalt, thou must be mine! For thee I have hazarded my soul—ere now Antonio is dead!

GUADALUPÈ.

Antonio dead? Oh, monster, monster! thou could'st not be so cruel!

LEYVA.

So none else be ever in thine arms I care not for thy hate. Thou shalt be Leyva's bride;—this very night—this instant. (*seizes her.*) Shriek on, shriek on! We are alone! Alone with love and ——

GUADALUPÈ.

Oh, God! Help, help! Antonio! Ha! he is here—I am saved! (*points, and while* LEYVA *stands irresolute, releases herself.*) Coward! He lives! he lives! or else his very name could never fright thee thus. Coward and cheat, thou art taken in thy lie; Antonio lives to save me from thee—fiend! (LEYVA *again approaches her.*) Look there! Ha! ha! [*escapes further up.*

[LEYVA *turns, but sees nothing.*

LEYVA.

Fool that I am! But I will have thee yet, tho' even his ghost should scare me from thy side.

[*As he gets near her,* GUADALUPÈ'S *face assumes horror and terror. She silently points.* LEYVA *turns and sees* ANTONIO, *who has just entered, covered with blood and dirt.* ANTONIO *stands aghast and* LEYVA *takes him for a spirit.* (*Music.*)

LEYVA.

Will dead men never rest? Mercy, Antonio! mercy—I will not harm her—I repent. In mercy quit my sight, nor let thy murdered spirit thus lay bare thy ghastly wounds! Away! away! away! [ANTONIO *moves to* GUADALUPÈ.

ANTONIO.

My wife! my bride! Thou art saved!

GUADALUPÈ.

He lives! he lives! [*rushes into his arms.*

LEYVA.

Alive? That blood? Those death-pale cheeks?

ANTONIO.

This blood Diego's, Leyva! And thy hideous villainy it is that thus hath ta'en the colour from my cheeks! I know all; Diego, thy vile servant, ere, terror-struck, he breathed his last, confessed, in panic-hope, to make his peace with heaven even in the parting pang ——

LEYVA. (*aside.*)

Death even made the hard Diego feel, and falter 'grace' to one more rugged than himself!

ANTONIO.

And this good sword, bedabbled with his gore, should drink thine too, but that my father loved thee—too well—alas! too well! [*retires with* GUADALUPÈ.

LEYVA.

Foiled—baffled—wrecked! at the very crisis of my joy. I yet may have revenge, and rob another of the bliss I may not have myself. (*half draws his sword.*) Nay, nay! I cannot fence! Pistols! The River-side! Draw lots who fires—one only loaded—I gain the chance, and then his fate is sealed!

(*Re-enter* ANTONIO.)

ANTONIO.

Villain, begone! to-morrow at earliest dawning we will leave this house, once the abode of honour and peace, but now a villain's home. Begone, I say! your secret is safe with me; I cannot hurt the man my father loved—begone, thy crimes oppress the air! I stifle near thee—go!

LEYVA.

We part not so! I am aware, among the Rancheros, thou hast learned the cunning tricks of fence—so well that few may cope with thee.

ANTONIO.

Diego is dead!

LEYVA.

Foul fall the bungling coward! But yet thou shalt not 'scape me. Pistols will equal all; our hatred must be quenched in blood, or yours or mine. Mark yonder moon—it shone on my despair, and shall on my revenge! To the River-side—come! This instant, come! I 'll bear the pistols there ——

ANTONIO.

I will not fight with thee! I forgive thee, and pray heaven do so too!

LEYVA.

What? I that would have murdered thee, and then usurped thy bed,—can 'st thou forgive the lover of thy wife?

ANTONIO.

I can! I do! Repent thy meditated crimes! I will not fight ——

LEYVA.

Thou wilt!

ANTONIO.

Never!

LEYVA.

When thou hast heard, thou wil 't! Listen! thou was 't thy father's heir—his darling. I forged the will which robbed thee of thy lands ——

ANTONIO.

Thank heaven! he loved me to the last! Villain! even this I can forgive!

LEYVA.

I struck the blow which robbed thee of his love—his life. I smothered him to hide my forgery! Say, now then wil 't thou fight? I swear I slew thy father!

ANTONIO. (*hurling him across the stage.*)

Thy uncle's murderer! Monster of hell! The earth must gape to hide thee in her womb! The sun must grudge his rays, while thou art here; and even the gentle moon, that loves not deeds of blood, will shed her brightest beams to aid thy fall. 'Twere charity to kill thee—go on—I follow straight!

LEYVA.

'Tis well! I knew that you would come! [*exit.*

ANTONIO. (*at door.*)

My wife! my own! I may not see thee more! But rather that, than let this villain live! Farewell, my wife! Oh, God, protect the right—my bride! my love! [*exit.*

(*After a pause, enter* GUADALUPÈ.)

GUADALUPÈ.

Antonio! husband!—gone. That fiend will murder him! Antonio! oh, God, he is saved but to be lost—Antonio! husband! [*exit calling.*

SCENE III.

A River-side—Moonlight.

ANTONIO *and* LEYVA.

[LEYVA *places two pistols under a handkerchief.*

LEYVA.

Choose! But one is loaded! We draw lots for the first shot.

ANTONIO. (*taking a pistol.*)

As you please!

LEYVA.

Here are two blades of grass—draw! The longest fires the first! [ANTONIO *draws.*

ANTONIO.

I have the shortest.

LEYVA.

Are you ready?

[ANTONIO *draws his sword and holds it in his right hand, his pistol in his left, both close to* LEYVA.

I am!

LEYVA.

What need of swords? There 's death enough in this!

ANTONIO.

If am hit, even in my dying moment this sword shall pierce thy heart. If I fall, so must *thou*—fire!

LEYVA.

Thou do'st not even tremble?

ANTONIO.

The guilty, alone, fear death!

LEYVA. (*turning his head after taking aim.*)

I would not see thee fall—I fire!

LEYVA *fires, but* ANTONIO *stands unhurt, with sword and pistol levelled at* LEYVA.

(*Enter* GUADALUPÈ.

My husband—thou art safe!

LEYVA. (*turning.*)

Accursed chance! The loaded pistol's here!

[*suddenly seizes* ANTONIO'S *hand and turns the pistol, and fires; but the ghost rising behind* ANTONIO, *has caused the pistol to swerve, and* LEYVA'S *face becomes contracted with horrible contortions.*

ANTONIO. (*lowering sword, and throwing away pistol.*)

The wrath of heaven is on thee! Thine eyes—bursting with horror, start from their bounds, as if they fathomed some mysterious world ours cannot stretch to. He is *conscience-stricken!* Father! thou art avenged without my hand being stained!

LEYVA. (*dying.*)

Who says I killed thee? Let him stand forth! Poisoned by his physician, as hundreds daily are—I never smothered thee! Rack me no more—strike home, Diego! Ha, coward! Antonio lives. Oh, God! forgive! Oh, Guadalupè, oh!

[*dies at her feet.*

TABLEAU.

The ghost points triumphantly to the scene, and slowly vanishes, as the curtain falls.

Finis.

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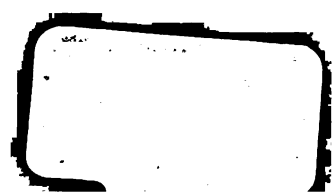
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